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SHAKESPEARE'S
MERCHANT
OF VENICE



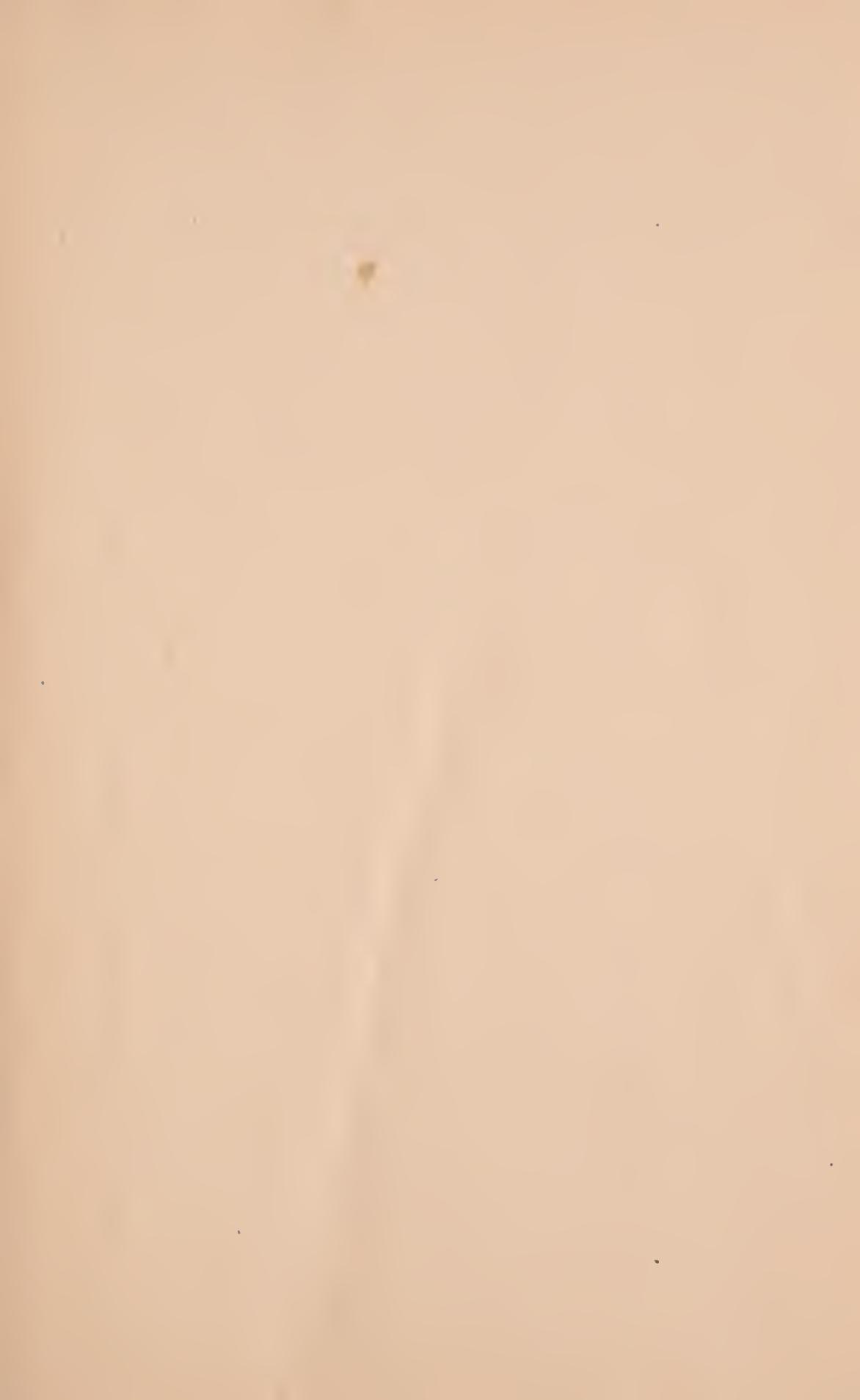
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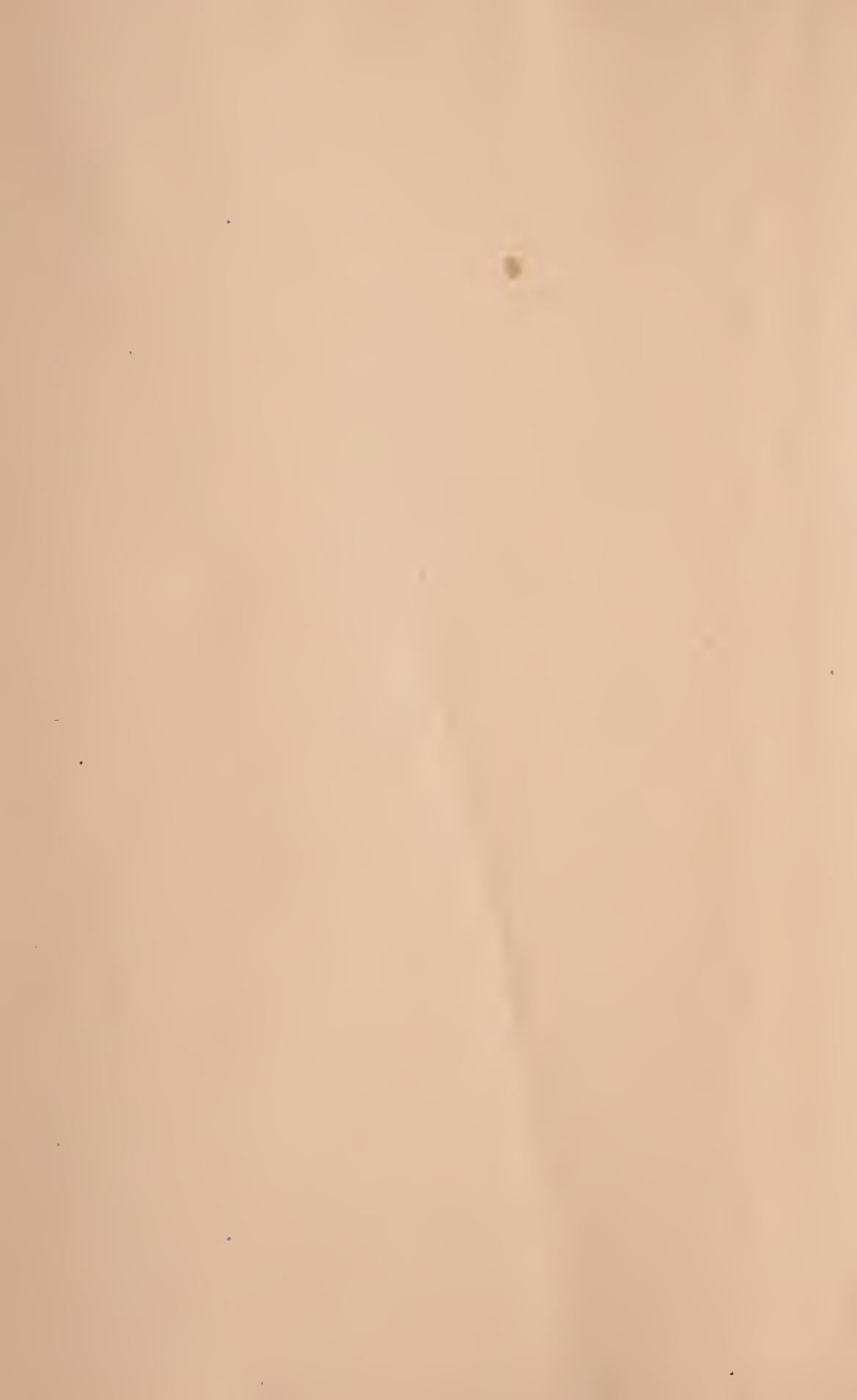


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WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE
From the painting by Chappel

William Shakespeare

SHAKESPEARE'S THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

EDITED BY

PAULINE W. LEONARD

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PREFACE

16/III/51
The importance of the study of Shakespeare in the schools has been increasing during the last few decades. Our educational scheme, tending to throw less and less emphasis on the classics, has made it the more necessary for young people to learn to know well some English writer of the first rank who can furnish them with a standard with which to compare the literature of their own day. Fortunately in Shakespeare they can find an Englishman whose virile grasp of the facts of life and robust frankness of expression make him peculiarly congenial to twentieth-century youth. Among his plays none is more certain to interest and appeal than *The Merchant of Venice*, with its strongly contrasted characters, its powerfully dramatic situations, and its vivid pictures of the luxury and splendor of the life of the Incomparable City.

We must agree with Shakespeare himself that "the play's the thing." In this edition, therefore, the Introduction and Notes are designed particularly to help the students appreciate its three outstanding dramatic features: skilful management of a difficult and complicated plot, variety and excellence in character drawing, and an effective use of local color, which gives it great beauty of setting and is not common in Elizabethan drama.

Special emphasis is here laid on the setting for much the same reason that the guide books provide information concerning a city for those who are

about to visit it. Students cannot properly appreciate this play without its picturesque and luxurious Venetian background, and certainly an adequate understanding of the Elizabethans' point of view is difficult without some knowledge of Renaissance Italy to which they owed so much. Venice is particularly important to know about for it stood then in the eyes of the world for luxury and culture as Paris later came to stand for gaiety and fashion. The idea has been to give students so far as possible the background and point of view of Shakespeare and the people of his day, a preparation which makes the play and its characters incomparably more delightful and comprehensible. It need hardly be said that this preparatory material should be read before the play is begun, for nothing is more ill advised than to stop a class in the midst of a dramatic situation to discuss even the most important point of history or language.

No formal character sketches are given. This is work that can most profitably be done by the students themselves with the aid of the information and suggestions scattered through the Introduction. The reassembling of this material, using it in connection with the ideas and opinions they have formed in reading the play, will fix the facts in their minds better than any other exercise that could be devised. It will give them above all a desirable opportunity for personal expression.

The teacher will find the summary of the plot in the Appendix a convenient outline into which the class can fit the different scenes of an act with an intelligent appreciation of what each has added to the general scheme. In this way the class will get not only a better understanding of the movement of

the drama, but also an acquaintance with problems of dramatic construction which is of great value in itself. Wherever possible the more important episodes have been emphasized in the Notes by an account of how an eminent actor has handled them, and scenes photographed from stage productions are given among the illustrations to help the students realize that this is an acting play, still effective on the stage.

Necessary language helps and the more important facts concerning the structure of the verse are given both in the Introduction and in the Notes at the bottom of the page. They may be read at a glance. But to help students enjoy Shakespeare's poetry, of which this play is so full, nothing can take the place of the spoken word. Best of all is seeing the play well acted. Next to that come readings and recitations by a good reader — preferably, for freshness of impression, someone outside the class. After that let the class see what they can do, both in acting and recitation. Suggestions as to scenes suitable for acting may be found in the Appendix and also a collection of passages especially worth memorizing. The questions, both on the chapters of the Introduction and on the play itself, have been carefully prepared to cover the ground adequately and include all the material called for by the college entrance examinations for several years past.

Shakespeare's life and theater have already been treated by the editor in the Introduction to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Golden Key edition). If this is not available, they may be looked up in any history of English dramatic literature or good encyclopedia.

For the details of Venetian life the editor wishes to

acknowledge her great indebtedness to the work of Charles E. Yriarte: *La vie d'un patricien de Venise au seizième siècle*; to P. G. Molmenti: *La Storia di Venezia dalle Origini alla Caduta della Repubblica*; and to W. R. Thayer: *Story of Venice*.

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INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER I

THE SETTING: VENICE IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

IN Shakespeare's time Venice was well known in London. He himself tells us in *As You Like It* that when a person said he had never "swam in a gondola," it was equivalent to saying that he had not traveled; and every returned traveler spoke of the Incomparable City with such enthusiastic admiration that her canals, her wonderful architecture, the gaiety and luxury of her people, the fame of her university at Padua, and the beauty of her paintings and music were familiar to cultured Englishmen whether they had been there or not. If a dramatist chose to locate his play in Venice, he could call on the imagination of his audience to set the bare Elizabethan stage¹ with a lovely and colorful background of Venetian scenes; and fortunately, when Shakespeare wrote *The Merchant of Venice*, he could be sure that the spectators would also have a good idea of the people and their ways of living. It will be well worth our while, before we begin to read the

¹ Students not familiar with the life of Shakespeare and the stage for which he wrote should consult the Introduction to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Golden Key edition), or any history of English dramatic literature. See "Books of Special Interest," p. 118.

play, to put ourselves, so far as we can, in the position of these Elizabethan playgoers, and make an effort to realize what Venice stood for in sixteenth-century Europe.

There was glamour in the mere fact that it was an Italian city. Three hundred years ago Italy represented the highest culture, the greatest refinement and elegance to be found in European life. It was there that the Renaissance reached its greatest glory; and young Englishmen went to the courts of Italian princes as to a sort of finishing school, where they might polish their manners, learn to write sonnets after the fashion of Petrarch, and acquire the stamp of a cosmopolitan culture. They enrolled themselves in Italian universities, too, in order to get a final intellectual polish, much as our ambitious students like to go to Germany, to Oxford or Cambridge, or to the Sorbonne. When Shakespeare wrote: "Home-keeping youth have ever homely wits," he doubtless had particularly in mind the advantages of Italian travel and study.

And most alluring of Italian cities to the traveler of that day was Venice, then at the height of her wealth and power, rising in dazzling beauty and romantic charm, like Venus, from the sea; preëminent in commerce, independent of emperor, king, or even pope, and luxurious almost beyond the power of our imaginations to conceive.

The very origin of Venice appeals to the imagination. In those dim ages when tribes of barbarians, one after another, overran Venetia on the way to Rome, small bands of refugees, bolder than the average, took their families out to a group of barren, shifting sand islets at the head of the Adriatic and built their homes there, knowing that if their lives

must be hard in such a place and full of dangers from the sea, they could at least be independent and free from their enemies. These poor but unconquered refugees were the founders of Venice. Little by little their descendants built up a trade with the main land, or Terra Firma, as they called it, — first in fish, then in salt, and gradually in their own growing manufactures and the products of the Near East. And so at last the poor settlement grew into a great city, which by the sixteenth century was carrying in her galleys and argosies the bulk of the trade between Europe and the Orient. For many centuries she was absolute mistress of the seas and one of the most powerful states of Europe.

As their wealth grew, the Venetians spent it lavishly in beautifying their strange city of the sea. They drove piles into the ooze and built on them palaces faced with marble, pillared, balconied, and carved in lovely patterns, often inlaid with colored mosaics and adorned even on the outside with paintings by famous artists. Here and there, in gardens behind protecting sea walls, flowers grew luxuriantly in earth brought by galleys from far distant ports. Between the rows of palaces, warehouses, and the like, the sea flowed in, and gondolas, barges, even galleys, passed back and forth. In Shakespeare's time Venice was the chief port and the gayest city in Europe, with half a million inhabitants, nearly five hundred bridges, and two hundred churches; and there were ten thousand gondolas, which made a water pageant even of her everyday life.

The climate was so mild that the people passed much of their lives out of doors, on the canals, and in the public squares. The Piazza¹ (Place) of St.

¹ Pe-at'-za.

Mark was the principal meeting place of all classes. Here one might see people of every nation and color; and the sunlight reflected from gold, jewels, silks, and oriental stuffs fairly dazzled the eyes of visitors from more somber northern lands.

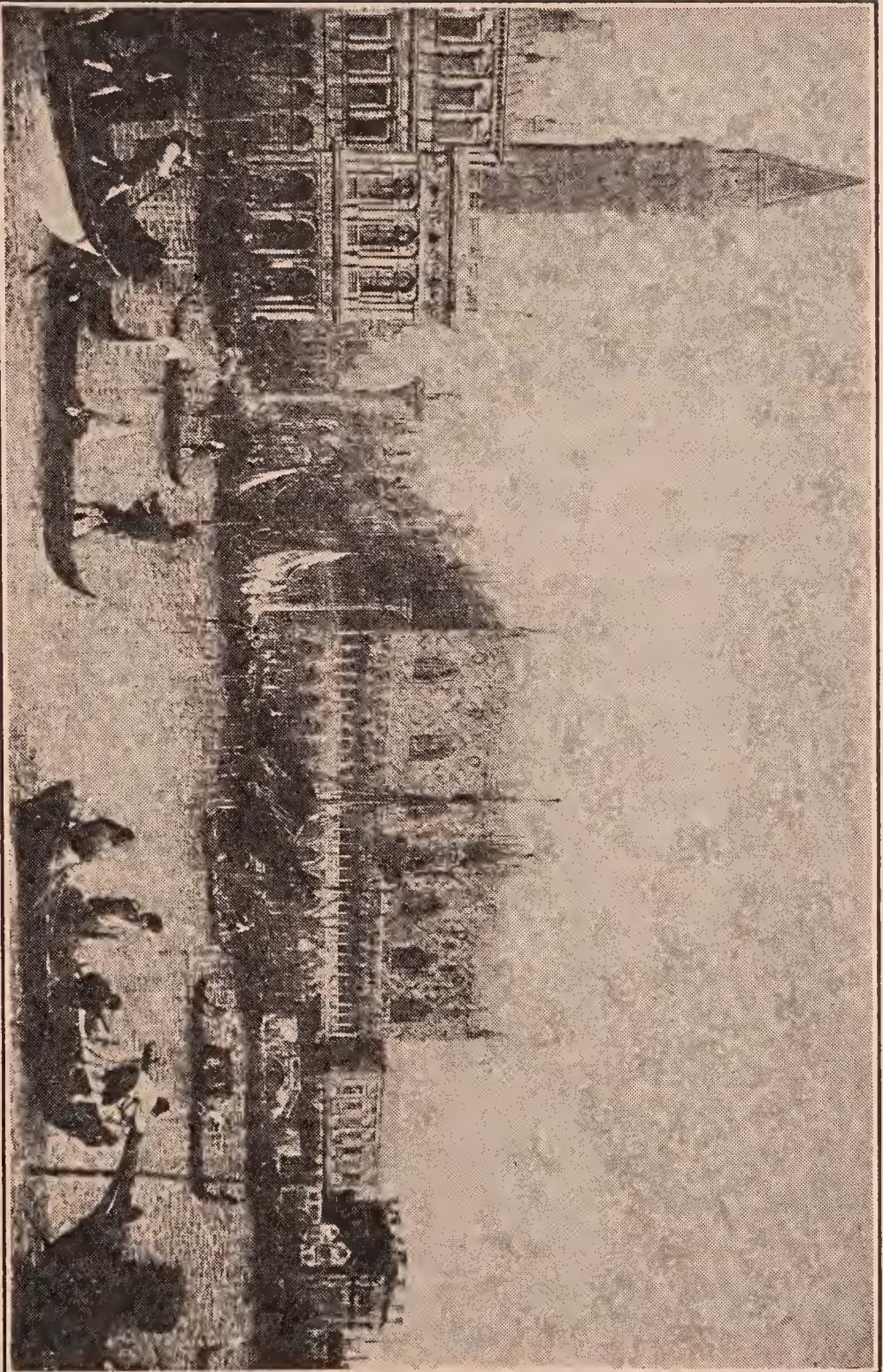
On one side of the Piazza stood the great church of San Marco (St. Mark), with gilded domes and mosaic front in the Byzantine fashion, glowing with color, which, says Ruskin, is “the most subtle, variable, inexpressible colour in the world,— the colour of glass, of transparent alabaster, of polished marble, and lustrous gold.”

Beside it stood the Doges’ Palace, which has been called the loveliest building in Italy. It was burned five times, and each time it was rebuilt it rose more glorious than before. In its final form, as we see it now, it surrounds a richly decorated court, and the walls of the two façades which face the Piazzetta¹ and the sea are supported by two tiers of Gothic arcades, one above the other. The capitals of the columns and the pointed arches between are carved in elaborate designs: “sculptures fantastic and involved, of palm-leaves and lilies and grapes and pomegranates, and birds clinging and fluttering among the branches.” Ruskin has described these capitals in detail in his *Stones of Venice*; but no description can do justice to the palace as a whole, which Taine has called “a magnificent diamond in a brilliant setting.”

Almost as wonderful as the Doges’ Palace itself, the palaces of the great Venetian families rose out of the sea along the Grand Canal, “the most beautiful street in the world.” They were reached by steps built down to the water at the level of low tide, and

¹ Pe-at-zet'-ta.

Canalotto



THE DUCAL PALACE — VENICE

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flanked by posts to which gondolas are still tied. On holidays, processions of gondolas and great floats, filled with crowds dancing and singing, hung with stuffs from Persia and Arabia, and garlanded with juniper and oranges, moved up and down the Canal, between palaces gay with banners and tapestries; and so frequent were the holidays that it sometimes seemed to visiting strangers that life in Venice was one festival after another.

The great Venetian painters — Carpaccio,¹ Bellini,² Titian, Tintoretto, Paolo Veronese,³ and many others — have left us pictures of the important events in the history of Venice, as well as portraits of her statesmen and beautiful women, from which we can reconstruct with extraordinary vividness much of the life of this remarkable city. The subjects of many of these paintings, to be sure, were taken from the lives of saints and from legends of other lands and times; but it is really the Venice of their own day the painters are depicting, its people and customs. In Carpaccio's *The English Prince takes Leave of his Father*, we are evidently looking at a scene the painter himself had witnessed, probably the departure of some ambassador from Venice. The boats and the architecture are Venetian, and so are the costumes and gorgeous accompaniments. In Paolo Veronese's splendid canvases, scenes from Scripture and mythology are turned into grand pageants of Venetian glory, painted with telling masses of color, the rich textures of satins and velvets in which he delighted, and all the sumptuous settings of the pomp and luxury that filled the life of Venice with beauty during this latter half of the sixteenth century. His pictures give us scenes

¹ Car-pâch'-i-o.

² Bel-lé'-ni.

³ Ver-o-nâ'-se.

which, except for an occasional figure, might have been drawn from the lives of the characters in *The Merchant of Venice*. In his *Family of Darius before Alexander*, for instance, we are even shown one of the monkeys, then the favored pets of wealthy ladies, such as the one Jessica sold her mother's ring to buy.

We learn much also of the luxury and elegance of Venetian life from accounts of travelers, chronicles, and other materials of that kind. Charles E. Yriarte, in a biography of Marco Antonio Barbaro, typical Venetian of this period, has drawn from such sources a description of the wedding of a niece of one of the doges, which gives a most interesting and colorful picture of the patrician social life in which Portia herself must have joined.

The Doge, we are told, "clothed in crimson velvet and surrounded by his councillors, received the bride-groom and his relatives in the Palace"; and the next day there was a ball, followed by supper, in the hall of the Pregadi. A fête in such an apartment must have been indeed a fairy spectacle, the torchlight shining on walls covered with gold and tapestries, lighting up a ceiling painted by one of the great masters, and reflected from the jewels of the guests and the gold plate and crystal on the banquet table.

The banquet was served with extraordinary elegance. Little fountains, statues made of sugar, flowering plants, and dishes of sweetmeats decorated the tables; the candelabras were of gold and silver; the plates and cups were engraved and inlaid, and the glass was the finest product of Murano. From the branches of the chandeliers hung silver vases filled with fruits and flowers; peacocks were served as if alive, with tail spread; there were salads in the shapes of animals, castles, and the like; and for dessert,

iced cakes, Milanese pastry, grapes, and fresh strawberries. During the banquet, the guests were entertained by singing, reading of poems, and dramatic performances.

On the day of the wedding, a hundred ladies accompanied the bride to the church of St. Mark, and at the head of the procession marched torch-bearers, trumpeters, and officers of the state. The church, and also the Piazza, were filled. After the wedding mass and a dinner in the Doges' Palace, the bridal party went on board a great gilded barge and sailed down the Grand Canal, to the sound of music and the roar of artillery, to the house of the bridegroom, where, by the light of a hundred torches, the wedding ball was given.

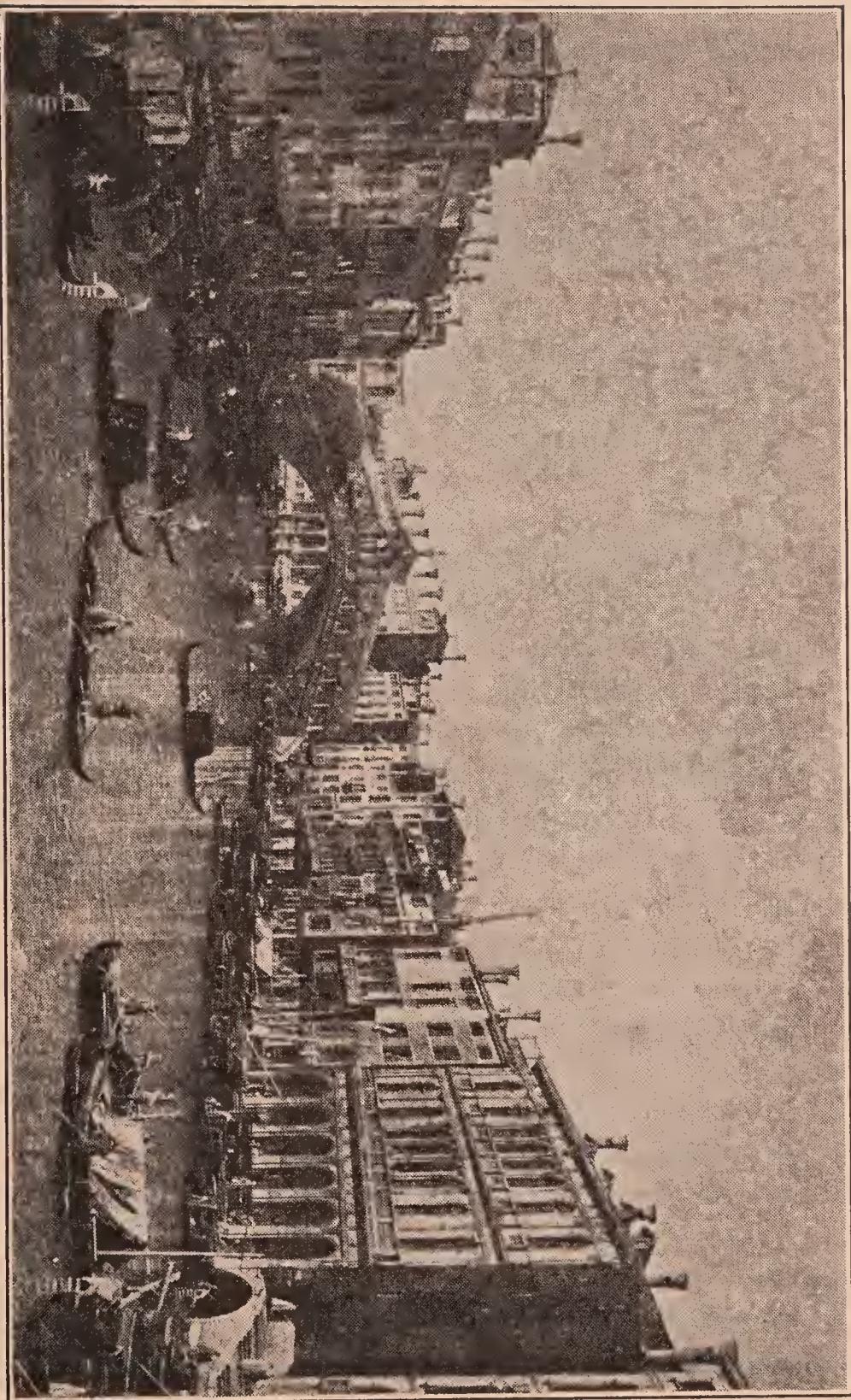
This was, of course, a semiofficial occasion. In everyday life the Venetians avoided formality and stiffness as much as possible. They had a passion for masquerading. Ladies carried masks along with fan and gloves; the Doge and all the magnificoes wore them at the opera or on any occasion when they did not care to go in state; and at private functions, like Bassanio's supper party, some of the guests often came in masks, marching through the streets with fife and drum and gay laughter, to entertain the rest of the company with music or a dramatic skit. It was this custom which gave Lorenzo an opportunity to steal Jessica in disguise away from her father's house; and the street music which Shylock bade her close the casement to shut out is a good bit of local color.

The main thoroughfares of Venice were the canals; but many narrow streets ran from one canal to another, across the islands on which the city was built, and the houses along these streets were the homes of

Canalotto

THE RIALTO

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the common people. Shylock's house is believed to have been on a street not far from the Rialto, the island on which the Exchange was located. The famous Rialto¹ bridge which led to this island over the Grand Canal had been built only a short time before Shakespeare wrote *The Merchant of Venice*, and it was then, as it still is, one of the sights of the city.

Among the other sights shown to strangers — interesting to us because they meant so much to the prosperity and power of Venice — were the glass works of Murano, where glass was blown of so fine a quality that it was said a drop of poison would shatter it; and the Arsenal, where there seemed to be "all the munitions in the world to arm the galleys," and where sixteen thousand men were constantly employed building ships. They built them on standard patterns, making the different parts separately and then assembling them, much after the fashion of the modern automobile manufacturers; and so efficient was the organization of these builders that on one occasion, to impress a visiting royalty, they turned out an entire galley in three hours.

This same efficiency and intelligence marked all the business affairs of Venice, and the result was a standard of living far higher, even for the poorest classes, than in any other city in Europe. One visitor writes: "Merchandise flows through this noble city like the water of the fountains"; and strangers were always astonished at the abundance of food, the number of bakers, venders of cheese, poultry, fish, and fine wines. The gaiety of Venice was no mere froth on the surface of the city life, with misery underneath, like the

¹ Re-âl-to.

gaiety of Paris before the Revolution. It had a solid foundation in the contentment and well-being of all the people — the result of good government and successful trade.

QUESTIONS

1. What brought travelers from all parts of the world to Venice? Give a quotation from Shakespeare indicating that he thought no person well-traveled unless he had seen Venice.
2. Tell something about the early beginnings of the city, showing how its geographical position was favorable to its growth as a sea power.
3. How does the location of Venice differ from that of the cities you know?
4. Give figures showing its size and importance in Shakespeare's time.
5. What do you know of the Piazza San Marco, the Rialto, the Grand Canal, St. Mark, and the Doges' Palace?
6. Who was John Ruskin, quoted in the text, and why was he qualified to speak with authority on the beauties of these buildings?
7. What do you know of the Venetians' fondness for masquerades?
8. By a description of a state wedding show the luxury and splendor of the Venetian social life in which Portia had a part.
9. What was the probable location of Shylock's house?
10. Describe the situation of the houses of the wealthy Venetians, the beauty of their exteriors and the water fêtes for which they made so fine a setting.
11. Give some evidence of the efficiency and practical intelligence of the Venetians in business affairs.

CHAPTER II

THE EDUCATION OF A VENETIAN

IT is always interesting to learn something of the school days of the people we meet, either in books or in real life, and the educational system of Venice was an important feature of the city life.

As soon as a boy left the nursery, he was sent to a public school at Venice or Verona, where he studied the usual subjects taught at that time: mathematics, languages, literature, and a little science. The pre-

paratory schools laid special emphasis on the classics, both Latin and Greek, as they did everywhere in Europe during the Renaissance. Since university lectures were commonly given in Latin, it was absolutely necessary for students to understand this language, and the quantities of manuscripts brought to Venice by refugees from Greece and by Levantine traders stimulated interest in Greek literature. The young patricians learned to speak as well as read this beautiful language in Greek schools found in every quarter of the city, and they became thoroughly familiar with the old myths and legends. Artists reproduced these myths in paintings and statues; they were used as subjects for plays and operas, and it was the fashion to refer to them at every turn of the conversation. We find that even Jessica knew them so well, probably through translations, that she was able to cap classic allusions with Lorenzo as they strolled together in Portia's garden. One of the ways by which Shylock is distinguished from the Venetians is that he is constantly quoting the Scriptures whereas they prefer allusions to Ovid, Virgil, and the Greek poets.

Even in preparatory school a boy had distinguished men for teachers, capable of inspiring respect for the subjects they taught. His schoolmaster might have held almost any important position in the state, for no member of the Venetian oligarchy could refuse an office if the Senate appointed him to fill it. And when the student reached the University of Padua, the topmost round of the Venetian educational ladder, he had for professors the most illustrious scholars in Europe. Jurisprudence was taught with such distinction that Padua came to furnish magistrates for all Italy. Matters of the most serious import were

referred to its professors of law, as we shall see in the case of Shylock *versus* Antonio, when the Doge seeks the opinion of the eminent Dr. Bellario. The sciences, also, received much attention. Sarpi, who, before Harvey, discovered the circulation of the blood, was a professor at Padua; anatomy was carried to a high point, chemistry was a specialty, and the Botanical Garden, still in existence, was famous. In Shakespeare's time, Galileo held the chair of mathematics. His discoveries of the pendulum and the telescope were matters of common talk and interest, as the radio and the aeroplane are to-day; and in 1594, when Shakespeare was probably working on *The Merchant of Venice*, the Senate tripled Galileo's salary in recognition of the honor he had brought to the university.

Not only scholars but also young men of fashion, princes, and literary men from other lands came to Padua. A brother of the king of England was mentioned as a student at the university, and young Lorenzo, embryo poet, may have written verses while sitting on the very bench where Tasso once sat writing his first poem. There were about eighteen thousand students at this time, crowded into a city much too small to hold them. Naturally they filled it with noise and disorder, leading even to bloody battles between the different schools; but, nevertheless, we read that the university was so illustrious that "the eyes of the world were turned to it as a center of light," and a professorship there was one of the great offices of the state, highly honored and recompensed — much more highly, indeed, than at our universities to-day. Evidently the deference paid to the opinion of Dr. Bellario in the Trial Scene and the respect accorded to Portia as his distinguished pupil, the

amount of the fee offered her by Antonio, and the honor shown her by the Doge's invitation to supper, were quite in harmony with Venetian custom.

After a period of study at Padua, the young patricians generally went in the train of ambassadors or in merchant ships to foreign countries, broadening their minds with new experiences and acquaintance with different customs, and perfecting themselves in modern languages. At twenty-five they took their seats in the Grand Council, which met every Sunday to decide affairs of state and included all citizens whose names appeared in the *Golden Book*, the complete record of the lineage of the patrician families. They were then eligible to various public offices; and, as this was the usual age for marriage, we may guess that it was about the age of Bassanio, Gratiano, and Lorenzo.

Unlike so many of the young men of our day, the Venetians did not lose their interest in literature and the arts after their formal education was finished. The gay youth of the period revived classic comedies in their dramatic societies, wrote clever verses, and frequently enrolled as pupils in the studios of the masters of painting and sculpture. Wealthy merchants prided themselves on their libraries and their collections of illuminated manuscripts and of the beautiful Aldine editions which still remain as evidence of the high perfection to which the art of printing was carried in Venice. The richest and most distinguished patricians aspired to be professors at Padua or librarians of St. Mark; and great generals and statesmen found their recreation in enthusiastic study of literature and the sciences. They were often artists as well. We find that the diplomat who negotiated peace after the battle of Lepanto was a student

of sculpture, and that a head of the church decorated one of the ceilings of the Doges' Palace.

The methods of education of that day trained the young men to great practical efficiency and a versatility remarkable even in an age like the Renaissance, when an able man could turn his hands or brain to almost anything; and they also succeeded in inspiring the students with a lasting interest and pleasure in the things that give beauty and enduring joy to life. Rarely in the history of the world has hard, practical sense been so successfully united with a highly developed culture as it was in these merchants of Venice. We are told that Bassanio was a soldier and a scholar, and we know that he was a man of many social graces. If later on he became also a successful merchant and distinguished statesman, we might regard him as a typical Venetian patrician.

QUESTIONS

1. Trace the steps in the education of a Venetian youth through the public schools and the university.
2. Locate Padua in relation to Venice.
3. What were some reasons for the emphasis on Greek and Latin and what was the effect on tastes and conversation?
4. Discuss the University of Padua as a "center of light," mentioning some of the most illustrious professors, and stating what achievements made them famous.
5. How many students were attending the university in Shakespeare's day?
6. What broadening experiences came to the wealthy Venetians after the university course?
7. Discuss and illustrate the "versatility" of the Venetians.
8. What was the *Golden Book of Venice*?
9. What guess can we make as to the probable age of Bassanio, Gratiano, and Lorenzo?
10. What reference is made in this play to a professor at Padua?
11. Compare as well as you can a graduate of the University of Padua in Shakespeare's time with a graduate of one of our universities.

CHAPTER III

MERCHANTS OF VENICE

IT is commonly believed that men who have great success in business must win it at some sacrifice of the finer things of life; but Venetian history gives good evidence to the contrary. For Venice, without doubt the most romantically beautiful city of Renaissance Europe, was preëminently a city of successful business men.

Next to her safety, commerce was the chief concern of her citizens. There was, to be sure, a patrician class, and during the time of her greatest prosperity no one could vote or be elected to office unless his name appeared in the *Golden Book*. But these patricians themselves were merchants; they bought and sold on the Rialto, fitted out vessels and disposed of their cargoes, sailed their own ships and headed their caravans; and they were bound by close ties of business to the smaller merchants, the guildsmen and the seamen who made up the greater part of the population of the city.

Coryat tells us that these merchants of Venice met on the Rialto, the Venetian exchange, “betwixt eleven and twelve of the clocke in the morning and betwixt five and six of the clocke in the evening.”¹ There, together with foreigners of all nationalities, who were granted the full protection of Venetian law, and wealthy Jews like Shylock, who enjoyed in Venice greater toleration and opportunity than elsewhere in Europe, they founded a great commercial state. Proud to acknowledge that trade was the

¹ Coryat's *Crudities*, 1611.

source of their wealth and power, they built war galleys to protect it; they planted colonies throughout the Near East to widen its compass; and as the years passed, they built up an empire in which the growing power of their splendid city was used primarily to further commerce.

A large part of their wealth came from trade with the East, for which Venice was well situated. Throughout the Middle Ages and the Renaissance she served as the go-between for Europe and the Orient, and the story of her enterprises reads like a tale from the *Arabian Nights*. In Shakespeare's day most of her merchandise, brought in vessels from Asia to Suez or Kosseir, was carried on camels to the Nile and from there by boat to Cairo or Alexandria, where it was loaded on Venetian vessels and taken to Venice. From Venice it was shipped to the western Mediterranean, to England or Flanders, or overland by caravan to Austria and Germany. All through this territory went the Venetian merchants; and for many centuries the Venetian ducat, like the English pound sterling and the American dollar in later days, passed current as the standard coin of the world.

According to Thayer,¹ the gold ducat was worth \$2.25 in bullion, and its purchasing power was twelve to fifteen times the same amount now. It was undoubtedly this gold coin which is referred to in Antonio's bond, for the silver ducat, worth about a dollar, was not the standard recognized in commerce. This valuation makes Antonio's transactions with Shylock easier to understand. The three thousand ducats he borrowed were equal, possibly, to as much

¹ Thayer, W. R.: *A Short History of Venice*.

as \$100,000 in our currency. He could not have got this amount from a bank, as a merchant with good credit could nowadays, for although the Bank of Venice issued notes, it did not lend out money to individuals at interest, a traffic permitted only to Jews. Naturally he would prefer to borrow so large a sum from the Jew, Shylock, making it a purely business transaction, rather than ask it as a favor from some friend or fellow Christian who would be forbidden by both law and public opinion to take interest on the loan. This prejudice against charging interest on money lent is one of the ideas of this period which we find hardest to understand; the feeling seems to have been that it was a monstrous thing, contrary to nature, for base metal to be made to breed like living beings, and no one with any position in the community was willing to engage in such a transaction.

If we bear in mind the great wealth of the patrician merchants, we understand why both Antonio and Bassanio treat a \$100,000 loan so lightly, and why Bassanio appears so insensible to his friend's danger. From the personal interest the Doge and his counsellors take in Antonio's fortunes it is evident that he was one of the merchant princes of Venice, of great importance in the state, and Shylock remarks that he has six ships at sea. These ships undoubtedly carried valuable cargoes. For instance, the usual cargo of spice at that time was worth about 35,000 sequins, or ducats, and some were valued as high as 200,000. They were fairly safe. Venetian ships rarely went far beyond the Mediterranean, war galleys were constantly on the watch for their enemies, and if they happened to be disabled, parts for refitting could always be found in some nearby port, where

the government maintained warehouses for their benefit. It is true, of course, as Shylock said, that

Ships be but boards, sailors but men.

Still, the chance that all Antonio's ships would be lost at once must have looked too remote to be seriously considered, and evidently Antonio himself had no doubt whatever that one or two ships at least would return before even two months were past and enable him to pay the three months' bond in good season. It is hardly reasonable to blame Bassanio, as many critics have, for not worrying over a contingency which must have looked absurdly improbable.

We might wonder, too, why he needed to borrow so large a sum as \$100,000 to fit himself out to pay court to a lady, especially since the lady's "seat of Belmont" was not far away, requiring a long and expensive journey to reach it, but rather in what was practically a suburb of Venice. But when we consider the luxury and elegance of Venetian life, we realize that Bassanio was actually modest in his requirements. In that day gentlemen of noble family wore satin, velvet, and cloth of gold, magnificently laced and embroidered, as well as jewels of such value that a chain or even a ring might represent a fortune in itself. His attendants, also, had to be fitted out sumptuously to do honor to a lady of wealth and high rank, and he must present suitable gifts to the lady herself. Evidently he could not have met his rivals on equal terms with anything less than three thousand ducats.

Bassanio belongs to the class of Shakespearian characters that cannot be understood without reference to the period to which they belong. Creations such as Portia and Shylock are of all time. They

stand out more clearly, to be sure, against the background of their own time and place, but they are so universally human that they may be fairly well understood without much regard to their surroundings. Bassanio, however, will receive scant justice if we judge him by our own standards and fail to take into consideration the habits and ideas of the young Venetian gentlemen of his day.

It shocks us that he should seek Portia so openly for her fortune, and that both he and Antonio take the situation as a matter of course. We wonder why Portia and Nerissa, so keen in judging the other suitors, fail to see through his mercenary wooing, and why all his acquaintances speak so well of him. But even apart from the mitigating circumstance that he was evidently in love with his heiress, we can find some excuse for him in the fact that the average young Venetian of the patrician class was by this time becoming disinclined to work, finding it easier to enrich himself by winning one of the enormous *dots*, usually as much as fifteen thousand ducats, which it had become the custom for young girls of wealthy families to bring to their husbands on their marriage. Venice had now passed the peak of her glory, and the sterner virtues that had made her great had begun to break down under an excess of luxury. In fact we read in a decree of the Senate of about this time that "the youth no longer undertake commerce in the city or navigation or any praiseworthy industry, fixing all their hopes upon exorbitant marriage portions." Evidently Bassanio was merely the child of his age — if no better, certainly no worse than the average in this respect; and his pursuit of Portia's fortune did not make him unworthy of her love.

In contrast to Bassanio, the character of Antonio

was evidently modeled on the Venetian patricians of the good old days, when they were active merchants as well as scholars, diplomats, and soldiers. We see in him the type of those merchant princes of Venice who were known and respected throughout Europe — honorable, kind, brave, and generous to a fault. Antonio's generosity, indeed, was so unusual that Shakespeare takes pains to inform us that he is a bachelor so that we may not think him criminally prodigal, and Shylock hates him because he has spent so much of his fortune helping poor debtors out of the Jews' clutches. His unselfish friendship with Bassanio is one of the high spots of the play. We cannot but admire, also, his unwavering devotion to the Venetian patrician's creed: that the good of the state must always be held above any personal consideration. When his friends express the hope that the Doge will not allow Shylock actually to cut the pound of flesh, he replies:

The Doge cannot deny the course of law:
For the commodity that strangers have
With us in Venice, if it be denied,
Will much impeach the justice of the state.

Not even to save his own life is he willing to bring discredit upon Venice.

His melancholy at the beginning of the play seems to be intended merely to presage the evil that is about to fall upon him, to strike the keynote of the action — a dramatic device common in Shakespeare's plays. We notice a similar expression in Portia's first speech, and it furnishes an effective contrast to the irresponsible gaiety of the youth who make up the rest of Bassanio's circle.

Gratiano and Lorenzo are evidently young men of about Bassanio's own age, not yet settled down to

a career, and able to set out for Belmont, Genoa, or anywhere else at a moment's notice. Their position appears to be somewhat inferior to his, for they do not address him quite as an equal, and Gratiano feels himself suitably mated with Portia's maid, or "waiting-gentlewoman." They are by no means his dependents, however; they are guests at his supper party, and evidently go with him or not, as they like. Lorenzo, like Bassanio, marries money. It comes with a Jewish girl, of no social position in Venice at that time, but this does not seem to trouble him. He is the poet of the company, native to Bohemia rather than to Italy, and far more interested in Jessica's beauty and the excitement of the elopement than in her father's ducats. The special office of Salanio and Salarino, Antonio's fellow merchants, in the play is to bear witness to the esteem and affection felt for Antonio by all who knew him and to show the scorn and hatred with which the Jewish usurers were universally regarded.

The other two men in the piece, the unsuccessful suitors, by their very foreignness give it the cosmopolitan atmosphere that distinguished Venice. The choice of their nationalities is exceedingly interesting. The Prince of Morocco, as an Arab and a Moslem, suggests the close relationship between Venice and the East; and Portia's apparent respect and liking for him is evidence of the extraordinary tolerance, both religious and racial, characteristic of this mercantile city. We cannot easily imagine such a situation elsewhere in Europe at this time. Dramatically, the Prince's wooing is a gorgeously picturesque feature; and an audience of Englishmen, who had so long hated and feared Spain, must have been delighted to see his rival, the Spanish grandee, Prince

of Arragon, presented as a vain and boastful person, scorned by Portia, and decidedly inferior to a Moor. Shakespeare knew his audience well, as a successful dramatist must, and we often find him making use of such opportunities as this to play upon their affections and prejudices.

QUESTIONS

1. Explain the statement that Venice was a “commercial state,” and show how the position of Venetian merchant princes differed from that of the merchants of other countries.
2. When was the Exchange open for business?
3. How did the situation of Venice help her to build up a great trade? Give the steps in transporting merchandise from Asia to Venice and from there to other countries.
4. How much was a ducat worth?
5. How many ducats did Antonio borrow from Shylock, and what would be the equivalent in dollars?
6. Why did Antonio borrow from Shylock instead of getting the money from a bank?
7. Why did both Antonio and Bassanio treat this large sum so lightly? Discuss.
8. Why did Bassanio need so much money?
9. How was he typical of the young Venetian patricians of his day?
10. Why does Shakespeare make Antonio a bachelor?
11. Why did Shylock hate him?
12. Why is he melancholy?
13. Show how he is typical of the merchant princes of Venice.
14. Sum up the relation of Gratiano, Lorenzo, Salarino, and Salanio to the major characters.
15. Why would an Elizabethan audience enjoy Portia’s scornful treatment of the Prince of Arragon?
16. Give two reasons for Shakespeare’s choice of the Prince of Morocco as one of Portia’s suitors.

CHAPTER IV

PORȚIA AND THE WOMEN OF VENICE

THE villa of Belmont was evidently on the Brenta River, between Venice and Padua, a beautiful country where wealthy Venetian families had their summer homes then as they have to-day. We know

it was somewhere in this vicinity, for when Portia sets out to try Antonio's case in the Ducal court, she bids her servant ride to Padua with a message for Dr. Bellario and then back to meet her at the "common ferry which trades to Venice" while she drives along the highway more slowly in her heavy coach. This highway must have been the road from Padua to Venice which runs by the Brenta, and there is still a "common ferry" at Fusina, at the river's mouth. Probably the villa was near Dolo, twenty miles from Venice on this Padua road, for Portia remarks to Nerissa that they have twenty miles to go that day.

We get an excellent idea of such a sumptuous suburban residence as Belmont from the villa built for the Barbaro family in another suburb, which has been very skillfully restored. It stands on a hillside, and from the portico, which has Ionic columns like a Greek temple, there is a fine view of the country. The balcony of the loggia is decorated with figures in stucco, and the main hall, where the caskets probably stood at Belmont, is elaborately frescoed. In the wings on either side were the living rooms of the family, with some of Paolo Veronese's finest paintings on their walls and ceilings, and also bedrooms, very much like the one Carpaccio has painted in his series of frescoes on the life of St. Ursula. Indeed, St. Ursula's chamber might well have been a picture of Portia's own room. The detached chapel belonging to the villa is Ionic in style like the main building, so when Portia bids the Prince of Morocco "forward to the temple" where the candidates took an oath to observe the conditions of her father's will, we may suppose she was speaking of her private chapel, patterned, like that of the Barbaro family, after a small Greek temple.

The Barbaro villa is set back from the highway, and the avenue leading to it is still bordered with cypresses and set with statues and fountains, marble vases full of flowers, and clumps of shrubbery, sweet with fragrant blooms. Beside such an avenue as this, beneath a sky "thick inlaid with patines of bright gold," Lorenzo and Jessica sat and listened to the music which sounded so sweet in Portia's ears on her return from her trying day in the court room.

As she lived on the mainland, even though in territory which had belonged to Venice for more than a hundred years, Portia was not, either in training or character, a typical Venetian woman. Apparently she had been brought up and educated like the well-born girls of Florence, Este,¹ and the neighboring cities of northern Italy rather than like the women of Venice, who, from all accounts, were decidedly over-domestic and not intellectual. The educated Florentine girls, on the contrary, had much the same mental training as the boys; their minds were developed by serious study of the classics, which formed the foundation of all education during the Renaissance, and they took an intelligent and active part in public affairs. Clearly Portia was this kind of girl; and although Shakespeare probably did not mean to imply by her legal expositions in the Trial Scene that she had actually studied Venetian law, he evidently thought it would seem plausible to his audience that she could expound the law in the Ducal court, with some help from the learned counsel, Dr. Bellario, and hold her own against clever men. Such a feat would certainly require a brilliant mind and a solid foundation of education, but it would not have been

¹ Est'-é.

beyond the powers of the highly accomplished women of the North Italian courts, nor, indeed, of the English queen, Elizabeth.

The accounts we have of one of these young women, Beatrice d'Este, are so suggestive of Portia's character that they are worth examining for the side lights they throw upon it. They have been very cleverly pieced together by a late writer¹ to make a series of vivid pictures, the first one showing Beatrice and her friends, all in the guise of Turkish ladies, flocking about her husband, the Duke of Milan, whom she passionately loves. — "She has worked all night devising the dresses." — Then suddenly she and her whole company rush away from him to play a practical joke. — "Who would think she could make Latin orations, and listen as closely as the Duke, her husband, to ambassadors of intricate, maybe deadly, import?" — But, remembering how Portia, immediately after her brilliant defense of Antonio, played a merry joke upon her husband, getting away from him the ring he had sworn to her to keep, we are not so much surprised at the mischief of this wise and learned Beatrice.

Again, in the evening, we see her "red as a rose with delight," for soon she will be dancing, and the Duke "never looked princelier than in the suit of white Lyons velvet he is wearing." All this sounds feminine enough, to be sure; but we read that next morning at the hunt, "like an Eastern bird on her great black horse, she rides straight as a man, they say." How like Portia is this delightful mixture of masculine courage and feminine tenderness, of keen, straight thinking and mischievous gaiety, of a fine loyalty and

¹ Taylor, Rachel A.: *Leonardo the Florentine*.

a loving heart with the hint of coquetry and dash of malice which give her wit its tang and fascination!

Evidently Shakespeare could find a model for the character of Portia easily enough among the famous women of northern Italy, such as Beatrice d'Este; but it is the ways and manners of the Venetian women, her neighbors in the villas along the Brenta River — those luxurious, beautiful, but rather soulless ladies we see in the paintings of Titian and Paolo Veronese, to which we must look for the little details of daily living that give form and body to the creations of a poet's fancy.

Women are not mentioned in the chronicles of Venice — good evidence that they took no part in public life; but we can learn much about them from paintings and engravings, comments of travelers, even such sources as sumptuary laws, and everything seems to indicate that, except when they went to the parish church a few doors away, they spent most of their time on their balconies or housetops, among their flowers and pets, or indoors in household affairs, making elaborate toilets, playing cards, which were first made in a Venetian factory, eating delicate collations enlivened by gossip, and practicing on the lyre or the clavichord. In some such way, doubtless, Portia and Nerissa passed the long, bright days at Belmont, while they waited for the right suitor to come and choose the leaden casket.

On great church festivals and public holidays, the patrician ladies went out with their escorts or their servants, teetering on absurdly high-heeled shoes, artfully made up, wearing fortunes in gold and pearls, and costly garments cut in the latest Paris fashions. We read that on Ascension Day, when the Doge, with splendid ceremonial, threw a gold ring into the

Adriatic in token of the wedding of the city with the sea, all the ladies walked through the Merceria, the principal shopping street, on their way home from the fête, to look in a certain shop window where a life-sized doll, dressed in the latest fashions fresh from Paris, was to be seen every year at this time. And it was not only the patrician women who took a deep interest in the Paris fashions. Many of the commoners dressed so finely that, according to one visitor: "Every shoemakers or taylors wife will have a gowne of silke and one to carrie up her traine."

In all such matters of everyday life, Portia would naturally follow the customs of these Venetian ladies about her. Her villa was doubtless built and furnished like those of the patricians who had country houses near by; her clothes would be cut after the pattern of the doll's on the Merceria; and we suspect that, like the other ladies in the neighborhood, she may have bleached her hair red-gold, the shade we see in Titian's pictures. There is, of course, an occasional blonde among Italian women, but they are rare; and both from the paintings and from the comments of travelers it is clear that it was then the almost universal fashion for Venetian ladies to dye or bleach their hair that particular shade. There is still in existence a recipe for such a dye or bleach given to a lady by a celebrated physician of the day. They applied it with a little sponge on the end of a stick and then sat in the sun up on the roofs of their houses to dry it, wearing big circles of straw, like crownless hats, to save their complexions; and we may imagine that they gossiped and exchanged repartee as they sat there sunning themselves, much like Portia and Nerissa in their first scene.

The fashions of dressing the hair, say the writers,

changed like the moon. Portia probably wore hers curled all around her face, the curls over her forehead arranged in two little horns. We learn from the play that Nerissa had left hers its natural black; perhaps she was not a sufficiently great lady to make it necessary for her to be in the height of the fashion; but she probably arranged it in the same way.

The Venetian ladies understood well the art of make-up, and had all sorts of costly trifles on their dressing tables: brushes, little pots of creams, boxes of perfumes, and gold mirrors. Following the fashion of the day, Portia's handkerchiefs, and even her shoes and gloves, would be trimmed with fine laces; her lingerie embroidered in gold, silver, and silks; her stockings of gold thread, thin as chiffon; her slippers decorated with roses of pearls; and the little coif she sometimes wore on her head, her rings and necklaces, sparkled with jewels of great value.

Outside their toilets, their pets, and their household cares, one of the chief interests of the Venetian ladies was music; and many paintings show them with musical instruments or listening to professional performers. The frequent occurrence of music in *The Merchant of Venice*, surrounding it with an atmosphere of beauty and harmony, was characteristically Venetian. Coryat, describing the celebration of one of the saints' days, wrote that it "consisted principally of music, which was both vocal and instrumental, so good, so delectable, so rare, so admirable, so super-excellent that it did even ravish and stupify all those strangers who never heard the like." Everywhere, from housetop and garden, from passing gondolas and the piazzas where the people gathered for their pleasures, tinkled the "touches of sweet harmony" which were part of the everyday life of Venice; and

many of the wealthy families employed musicians in their households for their own entertainment and for their guests, as Portia evidently did at Belmont.

It was in Venice at about this time that music was added to theatrical performances, and the opera appeared — as a sort of lyric fantasy, elaborately set, depicting some allegory or classic myth. The women were very fond of these entertainments; and, unlike the fashionable women in England, who attended only private performances, the Venetian ladies went to the public theaters as well as to the opera.

Amateur dramatics were popular, too; and both men and women took part in them. Probably Portia, and perhaps Nerissa also, had exercised their wits in *ex tempore* plays such as the Ortolani's, in which men and women discussed problems of love: whether the lover of a noble lady should aim to excel in arms or in letters; whether physical beauty or beauty of soul was the more to be desired; or whether art or nature was to be valued the more highly. Certainly, after reading their discussion of the suitors in the second scene of this play, we can imagine both these girls taking a lively part in such finespun arguments. They were the fashion of the day in England as well as in Venice, and made an admirable exercise for nimble wits, playing a considerable part in developing keenness and self-confidence such as Portia shows so notably in the Trial Scene.

We learn something, too, in *The Merchant of Venice*, of the religious devotion of the Venetian women, when Stephano describes how Portia spent the night after the trial, before she returned to Belmont:

She doth stray about
By holy crosses, where she kneels and prays
For happy wedlock hours.

There are still holy crosses along the roadsides in Italy, although, as Miss Martineau says: “The days are past when pilgrims of all ranks, from the queen to the beggar-maid, might be seen kneeling and praying ‘for happy wedlock hours,’ or for whatever else lay nearest their hearts.” But in Portia’s day such simple piety was still a part of the common life of Italy, and it gives her character an added grace and dignity.

In these devotions and in all her occupations and amusements, Portia was accompanied by Nerissa, whose position is best described by the title of “waiting-gentlewoman” given to her in the early quarto editions of *The Merchant of Venice*. All the great households of the time had well-born men and women serving as personal attendants, who performed many offices that we should consider menial but were then regarded as highly honorable. Indeed, most of Shakespeare’s heroines, if they have no sister or cousin for a companion, find one in some gentlewoman of lower rank, like Nerissa, who is admitted to intimacy on much the same terms as a relative.

QUESTIONS

1. How are we able to locate Portia’s home?
2. Describe in detail the suburban villa of the Barbaro family, its appearance and arrangements, showing what we may learn from it in regard to the scenes of the play.
3. Does it seem likely that Portia was educated like most Venetian women of her day?
4. Characterize Beatrice d’Este, with particular reference to her versatility and her many interests and capabilities.
5. Why is the account of Beatrice given here?
6. How did the Venetian women spend their time?
7. What painter’s name is associated with the color of hair fashionable at the time?
8. Give a word picture of Portia’s toilet.
9. Explain how the prominence given to music in *The Merchant of Venice* is true to Venetian custom.
10. What diversion

may have helped to sharpen Portia's wits so that she could hold her own in the Court? 11. Repeat the lines which show the religious side of Portia's nature. 12. How is it that Nerissa, who is not of Portia's social standing, is her intimate and confidante?

CHAPTER V

THE JEWS IN THE TIME OF SHAKESPEARE

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE was entered in the Stationers' Register, July 22, 1598, as "otherwise called the Jewe of Venyce," which seems to indicate that even in that day Shylock overshadowed the other characters of the play. It was not, of course, a suitable title. The Jew appears in only five scenes, three of them short, and he is not present at all in the last act, whereas the part of Antonio, merchant of Venice, is essential to both the main plots and is brought into every act. But with a great actor in the rôle, Shylock is undoubtedly the most interesting figure, and at the time the play was produced, anti-Jewish feeling was running so high in London that the baffling of the wicked usurer must have had a strong appeal to the English public.

Jews had been forbidden to live in England since 1290, but for some time those who professed Christianity had been left unmolested, and among them was a Dr. Lopez, the Queen's physician. He was popular with the nobility, often staying at Kenilworth Castle, where Shakespeare's company sometimes gave performances, and Shakespeare doubtless knew him. In 1594 he was mixed up in a plot to murder Don Antonio, a Spanish refugee much beloved in London.

Later he was accused of attempting to poison Queen Elizabeth. Unfortunately for him, the two court favorites, Leicester and Essex, took sides for and against him, making the case a struggle for power. Essex won and Lopez was convicted.

So far as we can learn now, the proof of his guilt seems to have been very slight. Indeed, the Queen, who was fond of her able doctor, for a long time refused to sign his death warrant. But pressure was brought to bear, excitement ran high, and she finally yielded. He was executed in June, 1594, before a jeering, yelling crowd, and such feeling as was then aroused takes long to subside. There must have been a good deal of it left two or three years later when *The Merchant of Venice* was produced, and Shakespeare probably had Lopez in mind when he created the character of Shylock. In fact we are told that Richard Burbage, who played that rôle, patterned his beard after the Doctor's. The name of Shylock's victim, Antonio, also suggests some connection between him and Lopez.

In order to understand the attitude of Antonio and his friends toward Shylock, we need to realize how intensely the Jews were scorned and hated during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Several causes united to produce this violent prejudice, and first, of course, came religious intolerance. The fact that the orthodox Jews caused the death of their Lord was sufficient to stir up the devout but intolerant Christian populace. It was regarded as a religious duty to hate and persecute their descendants; and such treatment, in a vicious circle, went far to accentuate in the Jews the very qualities for which they were despised. Moreover, being forbidden in many places to compete with Christians in trades or other reputable business, they naturally turned to money

lending, of which they had a monopoly; and this hateful trade, unregulated by law, was often carried on in such an oppressive manner that it still further irritated the popular feeling. Interest went up to fifteen per cent and sometimes even higher, and in case of forfeiture terrible penalties were exacted of the poor debtors. Strangely, as it seems to us, the people of that age thought it was a crime to take even moderate interest, and a poor man, stripped of all his substance by the usurers, naturally felt that the pound of flesh was no exaggerated symbol for the penalties exacted of him. It was, in fact, one of the most creditable acts of Lord Bacon as Chancellor, that he proposed limiting interest by law to five per cent.

Hatred of the Jews led to all forms of persecution, and in many countries they did not dare to appear wealthy for fear their goods would be confiscated. Therefore they assumed a mean way of living, which caused them to be regarded meanly; and doubtless they often became miserly from being obliged to appear poor. Professor Barrett Wendell has pointed out that one reason why Shylock evidently seemed comic to an Elizabethan audience instead of almost wholly tragic as he appears to us is that in those days the actor made himself up to look like a mean and cringing creature instead of the dignified Hebrew we are accustomed to see in the part, of the type of an Old Testament prophet. Possibly a modern audience would not feel so outraged by the insults showered upon him if he were presented in that mean fashion now.

How far Shakespeare shared in the prejudices of his time no one knows. He has made Shylock human, like every other character he drew, with human

feelings and a certain human dignity. It was evidently impossible for him to imagine a man in the guise of a fiend, as Marlowe did in his *Jew of Malta*, and it is worth while to compare Shylock with Marlowe's Jew, Barabas,¹ in order to bring out more clearly Shakespeare's great achievement in rising as far as he certainly did above the prejudices of his time. Marlowe makes no attempt to inspire sympathy or pity for his Jew. The malignity of Barabas, his inhuman cruelty, are not presented as even partially due to ill treatment by the Christians but as inherent in his nature. Moreover, these qualities are so exaggerated that they seem devilish, incredible in a human being. For instance, he poisons a whole nunnery because his daughter became a Christian and took the vows. And at one point in the play he says with wicked glee:

As for myself, I walk abroad o' nights
And kill sick people groaning under walls;
Sometimes I go abroad and poison wells; . . .
I filled the jails with bankrupts in a year,
And with young orphans planted hospitals,
And every moon made some or other mad,
And now and then one hang himself for grief.

Such unprovoked cruelty and murder lust belongs to some fabulous monster, not to a man like ourselves, and we meet it with incredulity and disgust rather than horror.

Shakespeare, on the contrary, although he makes Shylock malicious, revengeful, merciless, shows us that he has good reason to hate the Christians. We are shown the scorn Antonio feels for him and the whole Jewish race; we learn of his business injuries, repeated personal insults, and, bitterest of all, the

¹ Bar'-a-bas.

loss of his daughter and his jewels through Antonio's friends. Naturally we feel some sympathy with his thirst for revenge. Even in the Trial Scene, when his cruelty fills us with horror, we are won back to pity for an old man, broken by misfortunes and deserted by his child. When he turns to go, faltering:

I pray you, give me leave to go from hence;
I am not well,

the sympathies of the audience — at least of a modern audience — go with him.

Evidently Shakespeare was influenced by Marlowe. There are echoes in *The Merchant of Venice* of lines from the earlier Marlowe play which must have clung to his memory, such as:

We are the Jasons, we have won the fleece,
which reminds us of Marlowe's line:

I'll be thy Jason, thou my golden fleece.

Barabas's speech:

I learned in Florence how to kiss my hand,
Heave up my shoulders when they called me dog,

suggests Shylock's

Still have I borne it with a patient shrug;
and again his

O girl! O gold!

recalls Shylock's exclamation when he heard of Jessica's flight with the bags of gold:

O my ducats! O my daughter!

In the two plots also there are similarities. In both plays the Jew's daughter steals her father's jewels and loves a Christian. But, curiously enough, Marlowe,

who made a monster of his Jew, drew an appealing character in the daughter, Abigail, while Shakespeare's Jessica shocks a modern audience by her childish heartlessness. Abigail shows admirable filial feeling throughout the play, stealing her father's jewels from his enemies only to restore them to him, and continues to deserve his confidence. Jessica, on the other hand, hates her father, steals his jewels and money for her own use, and is distrusted by him, evidently with some cause, although he seems unnecessarily harsh.

The dramatic reason for these changes in the situation is clear. Shakespeare needed Jessica's desertion to help explain Shylock's fury, and Shylock's harshness to excuse her flight. But we find it harder to understand why, in spite of her unfilial behavior, Shakespeare and his audiences evidently regarded her as a charming figure, lovely and deservedly beloved.

Possibly Shakespeare himself was not entirely untouched by the contempt for the Jews which belonged to his age, and actually regarded it as a sign of wisdom and virtue in a Jewess to be eager to leave her own home for a Christian lover's. Certainly we find some evidence throughout the play that to him as well as to his audience Shylock's wrongs looked far less evident and pathetic than they do to us, trained as we have been to feel sympathy for the unfortunate.

For instance, we are inclined to feel some pity for Shylock when Jessica's extravagance drives him to insane fury, but this scene was probably intended to be comic. An Elizabethan audience found madness as amusing as drunkenness is sometimes considered on our stage to-day; and rage is, of course, a lesser form of madness. As Brander Matthews remarks:

“When Shylock himself appeared, wrought up to a pitch of frenzy, he moved the contemporary playgoers to ribald mirth,” and his ungoverned rage was doubtless regarded as an effective contrast to the dignified self-control of Antonio, the well-bred gentleman. The final condition, also, requiring Shylock to become a Christian before he can receive mercy, so smoothly made, so quickly accepted, shows the influence of the sixteenth-century belief that Christianity was so evidently superior to any other religion that nothing but stubbornness could explain a Jew’s refusal to accept baptism.

The change in the point of view of a modern audience, which has been so much to Shylock’s advantage, has borne heavily, perhaps with injustice, upon Jessica. Critics of late have been inclined to look upon her as a thievish and unfilial little baggage, “fair,” doubtless, as Lorenzo called her, but by no means “wise” or “true”; and this is surely harsh judgment on a lonely child, much in love, who fled from a dull life in her father’s house, where she was forbidden even to look out of her casement at other people’s pleasures, to affection and joy and happiness. Certainly it is treating her escapade much too seriously. The outwitting of stern parents by young lovers was a favorite, conventional episode in Elizabethan light comedy, and nobody thought of moralizing over it. We can see how the people of that day felt about it from an amusing scene in a popular comedy by Thomas Middleton, in which the lover, before they run away, gets his girl’s father, a goldsmith, to make their wedding ring and put in it for a posy:

Love that’s wise
Blinds parents’ eyes.

Says the deluded father:

You gentlemen are mad wags!
I wonder things can be so warily carried,
And parents blinded so: but they're served right
That have two eyes and were so dull a'sight.

That was the way Elizabethan audiences looked upon the matter; and the successful elopement of Jessica was doubtless to them only a good joke on Shylock, the deceived father.

We might wish, to be sure, that Jessica had not “gilded herself with ducats.” Still we must be careful not to be too severe upon her for that, either. The universal Venetian custom of giving a large *dot* with a girl in marriage may naturally enough have made poor Jessica feel that it was a disgrace for her to go to Lorenzo empty-handed, and that a share of her father’s fortune was rightfully hers at her wedding. As for Lorenzo, he would probably regard her taking some of the Jew’s wealth in much the same light as the Jews themselves did the spoiling of the Egyptians many centuries before.

Keen as Shakespeare is in his insight into human nature, which remains after all so nearly the same age after age, we shall fail to understand Shylock and Jessica if we forget that three hundred years have passed since he wrote this play, and that circumstances, ideals, even moral standards have changed sufficiently to affect profoundly our judgment upon their actions. We shall have a much clearer conception of these characters if we take the trouble to get, to some extent at least, the Elizabethan point of view.

QUESTIONS

1. How was *The Merchant of Venice* entered in the Stationers' Register? Give the date.
2. Why was the alternate title un-

suitable? 3. Why were the Jews a despised race in Europe at the time this play was written? 4. Why did the case of Dr. Lopez tend to increase hatred of the Jews? 5. Give the details of this case leading up to the death of Lopez. 6. Who was the first actor to play Shylock? 7. How did his conception of the part differ from that of modern actors? 8. How do you account for the fact that a modern audience is more kindly disposed to the Jew than an Elizabethan audience would be? 9. Compare Marlowe's *Jew of Malta* with *The Merchant of Venice*, bringing out similarities and dissimilarities. 10. In what way is Shakespeare indebted to Marlowe? 11. Which shows the wider human sympathy? Illustrate. 12. What light is thrown on the character of Jessica by a study of the manners and customs of that period, and what excuses can be made for her desertion of her father and the theft of the money and jewels?

CHAPTER VI THE PLOT AND ITS SOURCES

SHYLOCK and Portia are such outstanding figures in the Shakespearian portrait gallery that we are likely to think of *The Merchant of Venice* as a character play and lose sight of the fact that structurally the story is the important thing. If we do this, however, we shall get the whole play out of focus, for Shakespeare evidently regarded it as a romantic drama, placing the emphasis decidedly on the love story of Portia and Bassanio.

If we consider the different elements of the plot in detail, we shall see more clearly how they are blended together to make a whole in which each plays its appropriate part.

The story of the pound of flesh is found in a collection of Italian tales by Ser Giovanni Fiorentino, then very popular in England; but it is adapted rather freely in the play. In Ser Giovanni's story the merchant is the lover's godfather instead of his friend,

and he has to fit out a ship for the young gentleman three times before he is successful with the lady. Shakespeare's Bassanio is made of more attractive stuff. Then Giovanni's Belmont, instead of a Venetian suburb, is a seaport somewhere along the route from Venice to Alexandria. Perhaps we can detect some trace of this old story in Bassanio's elaborate preparations for his trip to Belmont, fitting out a ship for a voyage of only twenty miles. Giovanni's heroine is decidedly a scheming widow, and she is won by the help of her maid instead of by a good guess at the right casket. The casket story does not appear, neither does the elopement of Lorenzo and Jessica; but the episode of the rings is much the same as in *The Merchant of Venice*.

The tale of the three caskets is a very old one, known to everybody, and much used by the preachers to point the moral that we cannot always tell by appearances, or, in other words, "All that glitters is not gold." People were so used to hearing it that they did not question whether it was probable or not — a great advantage to the dramatist. The common version, found in a very popular collection called the *Gesta Romanorum*, made out that it was the lady, a shipwrecked princess, who had to choose the proper casket in order to show that she was wise enough to deserve the hero. In some versions the caskets are all alike, putting the suitor's fortunes entirely in the hands of Providence.

Shakespeare probably did not combine these stories himself but only worked over an old play, which had much the same plot and which had been found to be effective, adding to it, and transfiguring by the power of his genius what was doubtless originally a very commonplace piece.

In the diary of Philip Henslowe, then manager of Shakespeare's company, we find under August 25, 1594, a reference to "the Veneson Comedy," which may or may not have anything to do with *The Merchant of Venice*; but Stephen Gosson, in his *Schoole of Abuse*, 1579, speaks of a play called "*The Jew*, representing the greedinesse of worldly chusers, and the bloody mindes of usurers"; and this certainly sounds like a combination of the three caskets with the pound of flesh. Shakespeare was fond of using good material from old plays, working it over into masterpieces of his own; so it is very probable that this *Jew* was a rough prototype of *The Merchant of Venice*, based on Ser Giovanni's romance and the old tale in the *Gesta Romanorum*.

Most critics agree that Shakespeare added to the original plot the characters of Arragon, Morocco, Gratiano, Salanio, Salarino, Tubal, the Gobbos, Jessica and Lorenzo, and the entire fifth act. We cannot, of course, decide upon such a matter as this with any certainty, for it is impossible to say exactly what was in the old play *The Jew*; but after reading some of the plays of this class still in existence, we feel practically certain that at least the character drawing, which makes the play eternally true to life, the careful working up of motives, and the poetry that transforms base metal into gold, were Shakespeare's own.

All the four stories that make up the plot of *The Merchant of Venice* — the pound of flesh, the three caskets, the episode of the rings, and the elopement of Lorenzo and Jessica — meet in the great Casket Scene, which is the dramatic center of the play. Here the joy of Portia and Bassanio at the happy ending of his suit is dashed by the message informing them that

Antonio's bond is forfeited; the messengers are the young runaways, Lorenzo and Jessica, now married, who are thus brought into relation with the casket story; and the exchange of rings, which is to produce such amusing complications, is also brought into this scene before Bassanio and Gratiano set out for Venice. Up to this point the plot has been piling up its complications. From this time on, they are to be resolved.

Such careful welding together of the four plots we may believe was due to Shakespeare's skill, for the old plays were not as a rule so closely knit. In working over such material he usually adopted the main threads of the plot, which in this case consisted of stories so old and familiar that they had gained the authority of tradition and would be readily accepted by an audience; he then freely added new material, changed the characters to suit his own conceptions, and carefully worked out the detail, generally making it conform as closely as possible to the probabilities. In this play it is extremely interesting to see how all the realistic detail he brings in distracts attention from the improbabilities of the old stories until even modern audiences fall so completely under the spell of the characters and become so absorbed in the story that they never stop to consider whether the situations are probable or even possible. In the first scene we are in Venice; everything is quite plausible; it might easily have happened. Then we find ourselves in Belmont, where two charming girls are talking over their lovers, as girls have always done everywhere. After that so gradually are we drawn into the realm of romantic fancy that we are not conscious of the transition; and whether we are reading or seeing the play, we accept it all without question and enjoy it thoroughly.

Sometimes when the details of a scene, examined in cold blood, seem to us improbable, we find that the difficulty is merely that the customs of that day differed so widely from our own that we have been unable to recognize their actual realism. For instance, in the Trial Scene in the fourth act, lawyers, and often laymen, are inclined to smile both at Portia's decisions and at the informality with which the trial is conducted; but Mr. John Doyle's account¹ of an experience he had while agent of a company doing business in Nicaragua suggests that perhaps the difficulty is not so much with Shakespeare's law as with our ignorance of the practices of Venetian courts at that time. Nicaragua was originally a Spanish colony and it was still using the forms of Spanish law of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, which would be likely to resemble those of Venetian law of the same date; and certainly the proceedings in the lawsuit in which Mr. Doyle became engaged were curiously like those in the case of *Shylock versus Antonio*.

The case having been stated by the lawyers on both sides, he tells us the judge announced that, unless either side objected, he would submit the question of law involved to a certain eminent lawyer as jurisconsult. No objection was made so the case was thus referred, and some days later, the jurisconsult returned the papers to the judge with a decision in favor of the company. This ended the case except for the "gratification" from the company, which the judge informed Mr. Doyle would be expected by the jurisconsult.

Interpreting Shylock's case in the light of this Nicaraguan trial, we see that both sides had evidently

¹ Cited in *The Merchant of Venice*, Variorum edition.

agreed upon Bellario as jurisconsult. Since, however, he sent Portia as his substitute, either side could challenge her, and she is obliged to make a special effort to win Shylock's good will in her opening speeches so that he will accept her in open court. He does this when he charges her to proceed to judgment:

I charge you by the law,
Whereof you are a well-deserving pillar,
Proceed to judgment.

At once, being now legally installed as judge, she changes her tactics, cites the law forbidding him to "shed one drop of Christian blood," and begins to marshal the Venetian statutes against him and his bond.

The account of this Nicaraguan lawsuit enables us to appreciate more fully Portia's clever conduct of the case, and we see more point in Gratiano's extravagant jeers at Shylock. Evidently by so eagerly accepting the "wise young judge," Shylock might be said to have brought his discomfiture upon himself. We see greater propriety, too, in the Doge's suggestion to Antonio that he "gratify this gentleman." According to our ideas, the young judge could not properly have accepted a fee or present from the winning party to the suit; but it was evidently the correct thing under old Spanish law and probably also in Venice.

The introduction of the Doge and the magnificoes in the Trial Scene may have been merely a dramatic device, for they are most picturesque and impressive figures. It is, however, not impossible that the Doge, who had the right to preside over any of the governmental bodies, might also, if he chose, preside at a civil trial in which he was especially interested. The "magnificoes" were undoubtedly the six Ducal coun-

cillors who attended him from the moment he rose in the morning until he went to bed at night.

The story of Lorenzo and Jessica, one of the three Shakespeare is believed to have added to the old play *The Jew*, may have been suggested by an episode in Marlowe's *Jew of Malta* mentioned in another chapter. But it is a common enough story. There is an Italian *novelino* in which a miser's daughter runs off with her lover, carrying her father's jewels with her, and perhaps that also gave a suggestion.

However it got into the plot, it is of great service there. Jessica's elopement with one of Antonio's friends and her theft of the jewels give an added explanation of Shylock's terrible, almost insane malignity, which makes it seem more human; and the young couple bring with them an atmosphere of poetry, of youthful passion and gaiety, which throws an obscuring screen of romance over Bassanio's too practical wooing. We owe to them, also, some of the most beautiful passages in the play, especially at the beginning of the fifth act, original with Shakespeare, which makes such a delightful contrast to the tense atmosphere of the Trial Scene. Shylock has gone and with him hatred and malice, and with joyous relief we lose ourselves in the poetry and music, the beauty and gaiety, that surround the three pairs of happy lovers.

Besides the four main stories combined in the plot of *The Merchant of Venice*, there is the episode of Launcelot Gobbo and his father, which is evidently brought in for comic relief when the play threatens to grow too serious. The name Gobbo may have been suggested by a grotesque stone figure supporting a pillar near the Exchange, called the Gobbo di Rialto, from which the laws of Venice were pro-

claimed; but it is a common Venetian name. Launcelot is a likable fellow in spite of his conceit — fond, like most of Shakespeare's clowns, of using big words which he does not understand, and given to atrocious puns. As the Jew's servant he plays an important part in giving us a view of Shylock's domestic life in all its meagerness and dullness, and he serves as a go-between for Lorenzo and Jessica. The scene between him and his father gives opportunity for one of the most charming bits of local color in the play — the old man bringing a basket of doves to his son's master, as to this day country people in Italy present doves for gifts.

QUESTIONS

1. How many plots are combined in *The Merchant of Venice*?
2. What are their sources? 3. In what respects do the stories as they appear in the play differ from the older stories? 4. What elements in the plot are generally regarded as original with Shakespeare? 5. Name the characters that he is said to have added. 6. What old play may have been worked over by him? 7. What parts of the plot seem improbable? How does it happen that we are blind to these improbabilities when we see the play or even read it? 8. What is the dramatic center of the play? 9. Show how all the threads of the plot are brought together and then unraveled. 10. Give the main facts in connection with the Nicaraguan suit and show how this throws light on the conduct of the suit of Shylock against Antonio. 11. Why is the Lorenzo and Jessica story of service in the plot? 12. Why did Shakespeare introduce Launcelot and Old Gobbo, and where did he get the name Gobbo? 13. What bit of local color is introduced in connection with Old Gobbo?

CHAPTER VII

THE VERSE AND LANGUAGE OF
“THE MERCHANT OF VENICE”

*T*HIS PLAY is written mainly in blank verse, a form of rhythm first made popular in the English drama by Christopher Marlowe. Normally it consists of five measures, or *feet*, each containing a pair of syllables with the accent on the second one of the pair. A measure of this kind is called an iambus, and the five-foot line, iambic pentameter. We find a typical example of it in the first line of the play:

In sooth / I know / not why / I am / so sad.

In Shakespeare's early plays, most of his blank verse is regular, made up of lines of this type, and there is usually a pause at the end of each line. But in time both he and other dramatists came to feel that these regular end-stopped lines were too monotonous — almost as much so, in fact, as the couplets, or pairs of rhymed lines, which had been the earlier mode; and in one way or another they began to introduce variety.

For instance, they would occasionally use a trochee, or two-syllabled foot with the accent on the first syllable, instead of the iambus:

Empt-ies / it-self / as doth / an in- / land brook;

or a measure made up of three short syllables:

To cut / the for- / feit-ure from / that bank- / rupt there.

Often an extra syllable or two appeared at the end of a line, making what is known as a feminine ending:

Wear prayer / books in / my pock- / et, look / de-muré-ly.

An extra syllable is often found, too, after a sense pause within the line:

With-out / the stamp / of mé-rit? / Let none / pre-sumé.

The pause in the middle of the line instead of at the end is a common variation, and a pause is sometimes found also in the first or second foot:

Shy-lock, / there's thrice / thy mon- / ey of- / fered thee.

Sit, Jess- / i-cá. / Look how / the floor / of heav-en.

Or in the fourth:

You hear / the learnéd / Bell-ar- / io. Whát / he writes.

Sometimes we find a short line, with some gesture or other stage business taking the place of the omitted measures:

Portia: It is / so. Are / there bal- / ance heré / to weigh
The flesh? / — / — / (During the pause, Shylock shows
his scales.)

Shylock: I have / them read / y.

And sometimes a line appears, called an Alexandrine, containing six feet:

Who choos- / eth mé / shall gain / what má- / ny mení / de-síre;

but this is exceptional.

In Shakespeare's early plays, such variations are uncommon, the blank verse is made up of regular iambic, end-stopped lines and we find a good many passages in the older couplet form. The verse of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is of this character. But in later plays the variations are constantly increasing in number while the number of couplets decreases. By the time he was writing *The Merchant of Venice*, which belongs to his middle period, couplets had practically disappeared, except to mark the ends of scenes, where on our stage a curtain would fall, or, occasion-

ally, where he wishes to give especial emphasis to two or more lines. He now shows a complete mastery over the difficulties of blank verse. The rhythm is perfectly flexible and easy, and it is at the same time sufficiently simple in structure to be followed easily even by an inexperienced reader. There is no doubt but that one of the reasons for the universal popularity of *The Merchant of Venice* is the extreme beauty and simplicity of its verse forms.

It is a difficult art to read blank verse so as to bring out the beauty of the rhythm without sacrificing the dramatic quality. Some excellent suggestions are given in the Appendix to the Arden edition of this play: "It is to be carefully noted here that though the metrical stresses, as metrical, have all the same value, yet . . . the lines are not to be *read* with five equal stresses. The reason for this caution lies in the fact that there is emphasis as well as metrical stress to be expressed. . . . Another equally important caution in reading is that the words must be grouped by their phrases, not divided at the ends of the feet. It is one of the chief beauties of good verse that the phrase-groups, into which the words fall, do not coincide with the metrical groups of feet and lines, but form, as it were, patterns of their own upon the pattern of the metre. It is in this counterplay between the metre and the sense that the charm of versification lies. . . . The metrical beat must always be rendered, but along with it the accent required by pronunciation and the emphasis required by the sense must be so clearly given as to prevent the 'sing-song' or 'see-saw' effect produced by reading lines simply according to their scansion." This perfect balance between metre and sense is the ideal to strive for; but if one must err on one side or the other it is far better to

overstress the rhythm than to read verse as if it were prose.

About four-fifths of *The Merchant of Venice* is in blank verse. This dignified form of expression, however, would be inappropriate for clownish characters like the Gobbos, and less effective than prose in repartee. Prose, therefore, is used in such cases. In other cases, it seems to have been used merely for variety, or perhaps at times for no particular reason. The structure of the play was evidently planned with care, but we are not to suppose that all the details were meticulously worked out beforehand. Spontaneity is one of the characteristics of genius, and much was undoubtedly left to the inspiration of the moment.

As to the language, in the time of Shakespeare English had not yet reached stability in grammatical forms. Indeed, a living language never is absolutely fixed, and even to-day we can see grammatical changes slowly making their way into our common speech. In the sixteenth century everybody used many expressions which have now either dropped out entirely or are no longer good usage. Most noticeable of these are:

- (1) The use of the dative, as in “pill’d me,” “you were best.”
- (2) Double negatives and comparatives, as “Nor shall not,” “more elder.”
- (3) The use of prepositions with certain verbs, no longer used in English but still retained in French, such as:

I humbly do desire your grace *of* pardon.

- (4) Prepositions used in a sense they do not now carry, as *to*, used for “of”: “an attribute *to* God”; *of* instead of “for,” “about”; *by* in place of “for.”

(5) *Which* and *who* used interchangeably:

I am married to a wife
Which is as dear to me as life itself.

(6) Omission of a verb of motion when the sense is clear, as in "I entreat you home." Curiously enough this is still common usage in some parts of the South and West, where one hears frequently such expressions as "I want in," or "I want out."

(7) The use of *her* or *his* for "its," then a new word in the language:

There is no vice so simple but assumes
Some mark of virtue on his outward parts.

(8) Poetic license permitting the pronunciation of final *tion* or *sion* in two syllables when the rhythm required it:

You loved / I loved; / for in / termis / si-on.

Most of these variations are quite trivial, but are mentioned here chiefly because, having once been noted, they can thereafter be passed over without comment, not distracting attention from the sense of the passage or the beauty of the verse in which they occur. In case, however, some of the students are especially interested in language, it will be worth their while to choose one of the variations mentioned and note its occurrence throughout the play. Such an exercise gives valuable insight into the way a language develops in accordance with its own genius.

QUESTIONS

1. About how much of this play is in blank verse? 2. Describe a typical blank verse line. 3. Who first made it popular in the drama? 4. What is a feminine ending? An end-stopped line? 5. Give examples of lines in which the pauses occur elsewhere than at the ends of lines. 6. How should blank verse be read? 7. What can you say of the use of prose in this play? 8. How

was the dative case used in Elizabethan English? 9. Give some examples to show that there have been changes since Shakespeare's day in the use of some prepositions. 10. Of some pronouns. 11. Name any other changes you can think of. 12. In what two ways may we pronounce the endings *sion* and *tion* when reading blank verse? 13. What is the metrical name for a line of blank verse?

CHAPTER VIII

“THE MERCHANT OF VENICE” ON THE STAGE

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE was first performed sometime between 1594 and 1598, at one of the London theaters, probably either The Theatre or The Curtain, with an excellent acting company but no scenery. The actors occupied only the center of the stage, with the stools of the more fashionable spectators crowding them on either side; and as there was nothing but a placard to tell where the action took place, great demands were made upon the imaginations of the audience. Fortunately the imaginations of Elizabethans were active and Venice was well known, so probably the absence of scenery did not seriously impair the effectiveness of the play.

The part of Shylock was played by Richard Burbage, with a red wig and false nose; and undoubtedly he made it, to some extent at least, a comic part. Still, since we know that he was a great actor and Shakespeare's friend, we can be sure that he gave an impressive impersonation, and that at times, to accord with the lines of the play, he made the Jew terrible in his hatred and malice:

A stony adversary, an inhuman wretch,
Uncapable of pity, void and empty
From any dram of mercy.

The rôles of Portia, Nerissa, and Jessica were taken by boys, an arrangement which was probably more satisfactory than one might think. The boys were very cleverly made up and admirably trained, and some of them were extremely popular in women's parts.

After the Puritans closed the theaters, we hear nothing of *The Merchant of Venice* until Lord Lansdowne made a garbled version of it in 1701, emphasizing the ludicrous and contemptible aspects of Shylock's character. This version held the stage for forty years, when the celebrated actor, Macklin, restored the play as Shakespeare wrote it. His Shylock was terrifying — hatred and revenge incarnate. When he declaimed the fierce denunciations in the Street Scene of Act III, the amazed audience fairly rocked the theater with applause, and a gentleman in the pit, said to have been Mr. Pope, exclaimed aloud in his enthusiasm:

This is the Jew
That Shakespeare drew!

Since then great actors have represented Shylock in various ways. Some, like Edmund Kean, have made him Justice personified, the typical Hebrew, revenging upon Antonio the wrongs of his race rather than his own. Kean was the first to play the part in a black wig instead of a red one, and he discarded entirely the comic features, astounding his audience by his terrific tragic passion and intense feeling. Furness recalls hearing his father say that "the prolonged, grating, guttural tone of utter contempt with which Edmund Kean dwelt on this word ['rail,' Act IV, Scene 1] had never left his memory."

In 1867, Edwin Booth revived *The Merchant of Venice* in New York, with beautiful scenery painted

from actual Venetian streets and buildings. "Venice," wrote one of the spectators, "with its pale, lovely colors, floats 'twixt sea and sky, like some city of a dream"; and in the street scenes a motley crowd, passing to and fro on its own business, created an extraordinary illusion of city life. Booth followed the custom of his day in omitting the fifth act, placing the emphasis on the part of the Jew; and his Shylock was a notable performance — subtle, crafty, grimly humorous at times and at others fiercely passionate, as when he cried out on hearing of Antonio's losses: "I thank God! I thank God!" Winter says of his acting in the Trial Scene: "The total effect was that of the vibrant, observant poise of a deadly reptile."

Many critics have regarded Henry Irving's production as superior even to Booth's. He restored the fifth act, giving the romance of Portia and Bassanio its proper place in the play, and bringing the part of Shylock down to correct proportions. The beauty and splendor of Venice came out strikingly in his stage settings and colorful costumes. Back stage, gondolas floated lazily past painted palaces and gay, moving crowds; there was music, soft and dreamy, of fifes and stringed instruments; the Rialto was crowded with traders, both Jews and Gentiles. And never could the fifth act be made more beautiful and idyllic — all flowers and music and a heavenly blue light suggesting moonlight, while "the serene presence of Portia dominated an enchanting picture of friendship vindicated and love fulfilled."

Winter¹ describes Irving's treatment of the elopement so vividly that we can almost see before our eyes

¹ Winter, William: *Shakespeare on the Stage*. Dodd, Mead & Company, Incorporated.

the scene in front of Shylock's house, the bridge crossing the canal and Shylock preparing to feast with the hated Christians: "When he had bidden Jessica, 'Lock up my doors,' he entered the house, was absent for a moment, and then returned, wearing a cloak and an orange-tawny, turban-like head-dress, and carrying a lantern and a staff. Hearing the voice of Launcelot, who was speaking in a hurried undertone to Jessica, but not hearing the words, he swiftly advanced to his daughter as Launcelot sped away, seized her by the wrist, looked suspiciously upon her face and harshly put the question to her — pointing with his stick after the departed servant — 'What says that fool of Hagar's offspring — ha?' Reassured by Jessica's ready lie, he turned from her, murmuring, 'The patch is kind enough,' and then, with the old proverb about the wisdom of precaution on his lips, ascended to the bridge and passed across it, out of sight. The elopement of Jessica and Lorenzo was then effected, in a gondola which moved smoothly away in the canal. The scene became tumultuous with a revel of riotous maskers, who sang, danced, frolicked, and tumbled in front of Shylock's house, as though obtaining mischievous pleasure in disturbing the neighborhood of the Jew's decorous dwelling. Soon that clamorous rabble streamed away; there was a lull in the music, and the grim figure of Shylock, his staff in one hand, his lantern in the other, appeared on the bridge, where for an instant he paused, his seamed, cruel face, visible in a gleam of ruddy light, contorted by a sneer, as he listened to the sounds of revelry dying in the distance. Then he descended the steps, crossed to his dwelling, raised his right hand, struck twice upon the door with the iron knocker, and stood like a statue, waiting — while a

slow-descending curtain closed in one of the most impressive pictures that any stage has ever presented."

Irving made Shylock a dignified character, almost an aristocrat in dress and manner, who respected himself and won a certain respect from others also, as a man who had money and could hold his own in a business deal. Ellen Terry, the Portia to Irving's Shylock, showed splendid intelligence in her portrayal of the character of this most intellectual of Shakespeare's heroines. Throughout, her Portia was primarily a great-hearted, large-minded woman in love. She read her lines beautifully, there was abundant vivacity, and her ability and artistry shone brilliantly in the Court Scene. She was the first Portia to wear a red robe as Doctor of Laws, and this made her, pictorially, the most impressive figure in this stirring scene.

Here Irving also was singularly dramatic, especially in his final exit. When the verdict was given and the penalties came down on his head, Shylock aged perceptibly before the eyes of the spectators. He himself said "I am not well," and Irving showed his illness. He became almost decrepit in a moment. There he stood, a man who had lost everything, crushed, hopeless, and fast becoming helpless. As he started to leave the court room, a hush fell on the stage; the actors riveted their attention on the defeated and broken old man. Even Gratiano held his tongue and forgot to taunt the Jew further. The silence was impressive, and the breathless interest of the audience added to the effect. Slowly and painfully, with no one offering him any help, he moved laboriously to the wings, the picture of weakness and despair, and put his right hand on some part of the scenery for support. After he was out of sight, that

hand slowly, very slowly, dragged itself along and finally disappeared. The exit seemed to take a long time. When the scene was resumed and the actors spoke again, speech sounded strange and uncanny. The audience felt that death would come soon, mercifully soon, and in pity for him they were glad. Touches like this, introduced by modern actors, have done much to give us a Shylock different from the one the Elizabethans knew. And Shakespeare, with his broad human sympathies and understanding — would he have approved? We can only guess.

Since Irving's, the most notable production of *The Merchant of Venice* was that of Winthrop Ames in 1928, when George Arliss took the part of Shylock. The stage setting, a foreground of dark arches with various painted drop curtains at the back, lent itself to very rapid changes of scene, one scene melting into another almost as easily and naturally as on an Elizabethan stage. The effects, though simple, were very beautiful. Prows of gondolas and the sculptured fronts of buildings, so painted as to appear to be on the other side of a canal, suggested a street scene; the Belmont interiors were hung with tapestries, and the Court Scene had for its background a triptych of pictures and a massed group of citizens who acted as a kind of Greek chorus, showing by their movements and murmurings the effects the actors wished to produce. They helped also to make the scene colorful, and their crowding showed what Shakespeare meant by the line:

Make room and let him stand before our face.

Arliss used Irving's stage business in the elopement scene, adding to it by crying out "Jessica! Jessica!" when there was no answer to his knock. He pre-

sented the Jew as a middle-aged man, his black beard merely sprinkled with white, and one critic remarked that the thing which most impressed the spectator was what a gentleman his Shylock was. Roland Holt, in *The Drama*, March, 1928, comments on his unusual quiet and restraint, even in the Trial Scene. He finds Shylock's collapse after he has been sentenced one of the most telling bits of acting. "Then after Antonio lifts him up, he brushes away the Gentile's hand, as though it were unclean." This is certainly new stage business. Indeed the whole modern conception of Shylock is far removed from the Elizabethan idea of him as the ranting and vindictive old usurer.

QUESTIONS

1. Give some account of the first production of *The Merchant of Venice*.
2. Who took the part of Shylock and how was he made up?
3. What do you know of the history of this play between Shakespeare's time and Kean's?
4. How did Kean act the part of Shylock?
5. Describe Booth's revival of *The Merchant of Venice*.
6. How did Irving's production differ from Booth's?
7. Give some account of Irving in the part of Shylock.
8. Of Ellen Terry in the part of Portia.
9. Describe the stage settings used in Winthrop Ames's production in 1928.
10. How did Arliss's conception of Shylock differ from that of the Elizabethans?

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

THE DUKE OF VENICE	
THE PRINCE OF MOROCCO	
THE PRINCE OF ARRAGON	
ANTONIO	Suitors to Portia
BASSANIO	A merchant of Venice
SALANIO	
SALARINO	His friend, suitor likewise to Portia
GRATIANO	
LORENZO	Friends to Antonio and Bassanio
SHYLOCK	In love with Jessica
TUBAL	A rich Jew
LAUNCELOT GOBBO	A Jew, his friend
OLD GOBBO	The clown, servant to Shylock
LEONARDO	Father to Launcelot
BALTHASAR	Servant to Bassanio
STEPHANO	Servants to Portia
PORTIA	
NERISSA	
JESSICA	
Magnificoes of Venice, Officers of the Court of Justice, Gaoler, Servants to Portia, and other Attendants	
SCENE —	Partly at VENICE, and partly at BELMONT, the seat of Portia, on the Continent

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

ACT I

SCENE I — *Venice. A Street*

Enter ANTONIO, SALARINO, and SALANIO

Ant. In sooth, I know not why I am so sad:
It wearies me; you say it wearies you;
But how I caught it, found it, or came by it,
What stuff 'tis made of, whereof it is born,
I am to learn;
And such a want-wit sadness makes of me,
That I have much ado to know myself.

Salar. Your mind is tossing on the ocean;
There, where your argosies with portly sail,
Like signiors and rich burghers on the flood,
Or, as it were, the pageants of the sea,
Do overpeer the petty traffickers,
That curtsy to them, do them reverence,
As they fly by them with their woven wings.

Salan. Believe me, sir, had I such venture forth,
The better part of my affections would
Be with my hopes abroad. I should be still
Plucking the grass, to know where sits the wind,

LINE 1. *sooth*: truth, as in *soothsayer*. 1. *sad*. Note that Antonio is haunted by a presentiment of evil. 2. *It*: sadness. 5. *am to*: have yet to. A moment of musing fills out the line. 8. *o-ce-an*. 9. *argosies*: large merchant ships. 12. *overpeer*: look down upon the smaller vessels bobbing in their wake. 15. *forth*: on foot, out. 17. *still*: ever. 18. Holding up a blade of grass to determine the direction of the wind.

Peering in maps for ports and piers and roads;
 And every object that might make me fear
 Misfortune to my ventures, out of doubt
 Would made me sad.

Salar. My wind cooling my broth
 Would blow me to an ague, when I thought
 What harm a wind too great at sea might do.
 I should not see the sandy hour-glass run,
 But I should think of shallows and of flats,
 And see my wealthy Andrew dock'd in sand,
 Vailing her high-top lower than her ribs
 To kiss her burial. Should I go to church
 And see the holy edifice of stone,
 And not bethink me straight of dangerous rocks,
 Which touching but my gentle vessel's side,
 Would scatter all her spices on the stream,
 Enrobe the roaring waters with my silks,
 And, in a word, but even now worth this,
 And now worth nothing? Shall I have the thought
 To think on this, and shall I lack the thought
 That such a thing bechanced would make me sad?
 But tell not me; I know, Antonio
 Is sad to think upon his merchandise.

Ant. Believe me, no: I thank my fortune for it,
 My ventures are not in one bottom trusted,
 Nor to one place; nor is my whole estate
 Upon the fortune of this present year:
 Therefore my merchandise makes me not sad.

Salar. Why, then you are in love.

Ant.

Fie, fie!

LINE 19. *roads*: anchorage. 27. *Andrew*: common nickname for a galley. 28. *Vailing*: lowering. 29. *burial*: burial place. 29. *Should*: could. 35. *worth this*, with a comprehensive gesture, indicating the vessel and its cargo. 38. *bechanced*: if it happened. 42. *bottom*: ship. 44. *Upon*: is dependent upon.

Salar. Not in love neither? Then let us say
you are sad,

Because you are not merry: and 'twere as easy
For you to laugh and leap and say you are merry,
Because you are not sad. Now, by two-headed
Janus,

Nature hath framed strange fellows in her time:
Some that will evermore peep through their eyes
And laugh like parrots at a bag-piper,
And other of such vinegar aspect
That they'll not show their teeth in way of smile,
Though Nestor swear the jest be laughable.

Enter BASSANIO, LORENZO, and GRATIANO

Salan. Here comes Bassanio, your most noble
kinsman,

Gratiano and Lorenzo. Fare ye well:
We leave you now with better company.

Salar. I would have stay'd till I had made you
merry,

If worthier friends had not prevented me.

Ant. Your worth is very dear in my regard.
I take it, your own business calls on you
And you embrace the occasion to depart.

Salar. Good morrow, my good lords.

Bass. Good signiors both, when shall we laugh?
say, when?

You grow exceeding strange: must it be so?

Salar. We'll make our leisures to attend on
yours. [Exeunt Salarino and Salanio.

LINE 50. *Janus:* Roman deity, guardian of gates; two-faced because every door looks two ways. 54. *other*, often used for *others*. 54. *aspect*. 56. *Nestor:* the personification of gravity, the oldest of the Greeks at the siege of Troy. 61. *prevented:* fore-stalled, literally *come before*. 67. *exceeding strange:* great strangers.

Lor. My Lord Bassanio, since you have found Antonio,

We two will leave you: but at dinner-time,
I pray you, have in mind where we must meet. 70

Bass. I will not fail you.

Gra. You look not well, Signior Antonio;
You have too much respect upon the world:
They lose it that do buy it with much care:
Believe me, you are marvellously changed.

Ant. I hold the world but as the world, Gratiano;
A stage where every man must play a part,
And mine a sad one.

Gra. Let me play the fool:
With mirth and laughter let old wrinkles come,
And let my liver rather heat with wine
Than my heart cool with mortifying groans.
Why should a man, whose blood is warm within,
Sit like his grandsire cut in alabaster?
Sleep when he wakes and creep into the jaundice
By being peevish? I tell thee what, Antonio —
I love thee, and it is my love that speaks —
There are a sort of men whose visages
Do cream and mantle like a standing pond,
And do a wilful stillness entertain,
With purpose to be dress'd in an opinion
Of wisdom, gravity, profound conceit,
As who should say "I am Sir Oracle,
And when I ope my lips let no dog bark!"
O my Antonio, I do know of these
That therefore only are reputed wise
For saying nothing, when, I am very sure,

LINE 74. You take the world too seriously. 79. *play the fool*: play the part of the fool, or clown. 82. *mortifying*: death-causing. 90. *And do*: And who do. 91. *opinion of*: reputation for. 92. *conceit*: thought. 93. *Sir Oracle*: personification of wisdom.

If they should speak, would almost damn those ears
 Which, hearing them, would call their brothers fools.
 I'll tell thee more of this another time: 100
 But fish not, with this melancholy bait,
 For this fool gudgeon, this opinion.
 Come, good Lorenzo. Fare ye well awhile:
 I'll end my exhortation after dinner.

Lor. Well, we will leave you then till dinner-time:

I must be one of these same dumb wise men,
 For Gratiano never lets me speak.

Gra. Well, keep me company but two years moe,
 Thou shalt not know the sound of thine own tongue.

Ant. Farewell: I'll grow a talker for this gear. 110

Gra. Thanks, i' faith, for silence is only commendable

In a neat's tongue dried.

[*Exeunt Gratiano and Lorenzo.*

Ant. Is that any thing now?

Bass. Gratiano speaks an infinite deal of nothing, more than any man in all Venice. His reasons are as two grains of wheat hid in two bushels of chaff: you shall seek all day ere you find them, and when you have them, they are not worth the search.

Ant. Well, tell me now what lady is the same To whom you swore a secret pilgrimage, 120
 That you to-day promised to tell me of?

Bass. 'T is not unknown to you, Antonio,
 How much I have disabled mine estate,

LINES 98-99. They would, by their stupidity, cause those who heard them to say to them, their brothers, "Thou fool," thus putting their auditors in danger of judgment. See *Matthew*, v, 22. 102. *gudgeon*: a stupid fish, easy to catch. 102. o-pin-i-on. 108. *moe*, or *mo*: "comparative of many, more the comparative of much." — Morris: *Historical English Grammar*. 110. *for this gear*: for this business. 112. *neat's*: horned cattle.

By something showing a more swelling port
 Than my faint means would grant continuance:
 Nor do I now make moan to be abridged
 From such a noble rate; but my chief care
 Is to come fairly off from the great debts
 Wherein my time something too prodigal
 Hath left me gaged. To you, Antonio,
 I owe the most, in money and in love,
 And from your love I have a warranty
 To unburden all my plots and purposes
 How to get clear of all the debts I owe.

Ant. I pray you, good Bassanio, let me know it;
 And if it stand, as you yourself still do,
 Within the eye of honour, be assured,
 My purse, my person, my extremest means,
 Lie all unlock'd to your occasions.

Bass. In my school-days, when I had lost one
 shaft,

I shot his fellow of the self-same flight
 The self-same way with more advised watch,
 To find the other forth, and by adventuring both
 I oft found both: I urge this childhood proof,
 Because what follows is pure innocence.
 I owe you much, and, like a wilful youth,
 That which I owe is lost; but if you please
 To shoot another arrow that self way
 Which you did shoot the first, I do not doubt,
 As I will watch the aim, or to find both

130

140

150

LINE 124. *something*: somewhat, modifying *more*. 124. *port*: state. 126. *to be*: on account of being. 129. *time*: springtime of life. 130. *gaged*: pledged. 137. *Within the eye of honour*: within the range of honor's vision. 139. *oc-ca-si-ons*: necessities. 141. *his*, used for *its*, which was a new word at that time. 141. *flight*: range. 142. *advised*: careful, deliberate. 144. *proof*: example. 150. *or — or*, used instead of *either — or*.



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Bassanio: I urge this childhood proof,
Because what follows is pure innocence.

Or bring your latter hazard back again
And thankfully rest debtor for the first.

Ant. You know me well, and herein spend but time

To wind about my love with circumstance;
And out of doubt you do me now more wrong
In making question of my uttermost
Than if you had made waste of all I have:
Then do but say to me what I should do
That in your knowledge may by me be done,
And I am prest unto it: therefore, speak.

Bass. In Belmont is a lady richly left;
And she is fair and, fairer than that word,
Of wondrous virtues: sometimes from her eyes
I did receive fair speechless messages:
Her name is Portia, nothing undervalued
To Cato's daughter, Brutus' Portia:
Nor is the wide world ignorant of her worth,
For the four winds blow in from every coast
Renowned suitors, and her sunny locks
Hang on her temples like a golden fleece;
Which makes her seat of Belmont Colchos' strand,
And many Jasons come in quest of her.
O my Antonio, had I but the means
To hold a rival place with one of them,
I have a mind presages me such thrift,
That I should questionless be fortunate!

Ant. Thou know'st that all my fortunes are at sea;

LINE 160. *prest unto*: ready for. 163. *sometimes*: formerly. 166. *Cato*: a Roman philosopher, whose daughter, Portia, wife of Brutus, is a prominent character in the play, *Julius Cæsar*. 169. *sunny locks*: doubtless Titian red. 171. *Colchos*: ancient Asian province east of the Black Sea to which the Argonauts came in their search for the Golden Fleece. Consult any mythology for the details. 175. *thrift*: prosperous issue.

Neither have I money nor commodity
 To raise a present sum: therefore go forth;
 Try what my credit can in Venice do:
 That shall be rack'd, even to the uttermost,
 To furnish thee to Belmont, to fair Portia.
 Go, presently inquire, and so will I,
 Where money is, and I no question make
 To have it of my trust or for my sake.

180

[*Exeunt.*]SCENE II — *Belmont. A room in PORTIA's house**Enter PORTIA and NERISSA*

Por. By my troth, Nerissa, my little body is aweary
 of this great world.

Ner. You would be, sweet madam, if your miseries
 were in the same abundance as your good fortunes
 are: and yet, for aught I see, they are as sick that sur-
 feit with too much as they that starve with nothing. It
 is no mean happiness therefore, to be seated in the
 mean: superfluity comes sooner by white hairs, but
 competency lives longer.

10

Por. Good sentences and well pronounced.

Ner. They would be better, if well followed.

Por. If to do were as easy as to know what were
 good to do, chapels had been churches and poor men's
 cottages princes' palaces. It is a good divine that
 follows his own instructions: I can easier teach twenty
 what were good to be done, than be one of the twenty
 to follow mine own teaching. The brain may devise
 laws for the blood, but a hot temper leaps o'er a cold
 decree: such a hare is madness the youth, to skip o'er 20

LINE 183. *presently*: immediately. 185. *of my trust*: on credit.

1. *aweary*. Note that Portia, as well as Antonio, is ill at ease.
 9. *mean*: midway between two extremes.

the meshes of good counsel the cripple. But this reasoning is not in the fashion to choose me a husband. O me, the word “choose!” I may neither choose whom I would nor refuse whom I dislike; so is the will of a living daughter curbed by the will of a dead father. Is it not hard, Nerissa, that I cannot choose one nor refuse none?

Ner. Your father was ever virtuous; and holy 30 men at their death have good inspirations: therefore the lottery, that he hath devised in these three chests of gold, silver and lead, whereof who chooses his meaning chooses you, will, no doubt, never be chosen by any rightly but one who shall rightly love. But what warmth is there in your affection towards any of these princely suitors that are already come?

Por. I pray thee, over-name them; and as thou namest them, I will describe them; and, according to 40 my description, level at my affection.

Ner. First, there is the Neapolitan prince.

Por. Ay, that’s a colt indeed, for he doth nothing but talk of his horse; and he makes it a great appropriation to his own good parts, that he can shoe him himself.

Ner. Then there is the County Palatine.

Por. He doth nothing but frown, as who should 50 say “If you will not have me, choose”: he hears merry tales and smiles not: I fear he will prove the weeping philosopher when he grows old, being so full of unmannerly sadness in his youth. I had rather be married to a death’s-head with a bone in his mouth than to either of these. God defend me from these two!

LINE 24. Note the pun on “will.” 41. *level at:* guess at. 44. *appropriation:* addition. 49. *County:* Count. 52. *weeping philosopher:* Heraclitus of Ephesus, who fled to the mountains to weep in solitude over the follies of men.

Ner. How say you by the French lord, Monsieur Le Bon?

Por. God made him, and therefore let him pass 60 for a man. In truth, I know it is a sin to be a mocker: but, he! why, he hath a horse better than the Neapolitan's, a better bad habit of frowning than the Count Palatine; he is every man in no man; if a throstle sing, he falls straight a capering: he will fence with his own shadow: if I should marry him, I should marry twenty husbands. If he would despise me, I would forgive him, for if he love me to madness, I shall never requite him. 70

Ner. What say you, then, to Falconbridge, the young baron of England?

Por. You know I say nothing to him, for he understands not me, nor I him: he hath neither Latin, French, nor Italian, and you will come into the court and swear that I have a poor pennyworth in the English. He is a proper man's picture, but, alas, who can converse with a dumb-show? How oddly he is suited! I think he bought his doublet in Italy, his 80 round hose in France, his bonnet in Germany and his behaviour every where.

Ner. What think you of the Scottish lord, his neighbour?

Por. That he hath a neighbourly charity in him, for he borrowed a box of the ear of the Englishman and swore he would pay him again when he was able: I think the Frenchman became his surety and sealed under for another.

LINE 58. *by*: concerning. 78. *proper*: handsome. 80. *suited*: dressed. 80. *doublet*: close-fitting jacket. 81. *round hose*: knee breeches. 81. *bonnet*: cap. 83. *Scottish lord*, according to the text of the Quartos, which were printed in the time of Elizabeth. After King James came to the throne, "Scottish" was changed to "other." 88. *sealed under*: put his seal below the other, as his ally.

Ner. How like you the young German, the Duke 90
of Saxony's nephew?

Por. Very vilely in the morning, when he is sober,
and most vilely in the afternoon, when he is drunk:
when he is best, he is a little worse than a man, and
when he is worst, he is little better than a beast: an the
worst fall that ever fell, I hope I shall make shift to go
without him.

Ner. If he should offer to choose, and choose the
right casket, you should refuse to perform your 100
father's will, if you should refuse to accept him.

Por. Therefore, for fear of the worst, I pray thee,
set a deep glass of rhenish wine on the contrary casket,
for if the devil be within and that temptation without,
I know he will choose it. I will do any thing, Nerissa,
ere I'll be married to a sponge.

Ner. You need not fear, lady, the having any of
these lords: they have acquainted me with their 110
determinations; which is, indeed, to return to their
home and to trouble you with no more suit, unless you
may be won by some other sort than your father's
imposition depending on the caskets.

Por. If I live to be as old as Sibylla, I will die as
chaste as Diana, unless I be obtained by the manner
of my father's will. I am glad this parcel of wooers
are so reasonable, for there is not one among them but
I dote on his very absence, and I pray God grant them 120
a fair departure.

Ner. Do you not remember, lady, in your father's
time, a Venetian, a scholar and a soldier, that came
hither in company of the Marquis of Montferrat?

LINE 95. *an*: if. 113. *sort*: lot. 115. *Sibylla*: the Cumæan
Sibyl to whom Apollo granted as many years of life as she could
hold grains of sand in her hand.

Por. Yes, yes, it was Bassanio; as I think, he was so called.

Ner. True, madam: he, of all the men that ever my foolish eyes looked upon, was the best deserving a 130 fair lady.

Por. I remember him well, and I remember him worthy of thy praise.

Enter a Serving-man

How now! what news?

Serv. The four strangers seek for you, madam, to take their leave: and there is a forerunner come from a fifth, the Prince of Morocco, who brings word the prince his master will be here to-night.

Por. If I could bid the fifth welcome with so good 14c a heart as I can bid the other four farewell, I should be glad of his approach: if he have the condition of a saint and the complexion of a devil, I had rather he should shrieve me than wive me.

Come, Nerissa. Sirrah, go before.

Whiles we shut the gates upon one wooer, another knocks at the door. [Exeunt.

SCENE III — *Venice. A public place*

Enter BASSANIO and SHYLOCK

Shy. Three thousand ducats; well.

Bass. Ay, sir, for three months.

LINE 125. *Yes, yes.* Note how quickly she recalls Bassanio's name, and then tries to cover up the confession of interest by assuming uncertainty. 135. *four strangers:* an oversight; six were mentioned. 142. *condition:* disposition. 146. *Whiles:* while.

A public place. Probably the open court adjoining the Exchange, or Rialto, where the merchants met for business. The Rialto Bridge led to it across the Grand Canal. 1. *well.* Spoken reflectively. It was said of Kean that his triumph was assured after this entering speech, so characteristic was it.

Shy. For three months; well.

Bass. For the which, as I told you, Antonio shall be bound.

Shy. Antonio shall become bound; well.

Bass. May you stead me? will you pleasure me? shall I know your answer?

Shy. Three thousand ducats for three months and Antonio bound.

10

Bass. Your answer to that.

Shy. Antonio is a good man.

Bass. Have you heard any imputation to the contrary?

Shy. Oh, no, no, no, no: my meaning in saying he is a good man is to have you understand me that he is sufficient. Yet his means are in supposition: he hath an argosy bound to Tripolis, another to the Indies; I understand, moreover, upon the Rialto, he hath a 20 third at Mexico, a fourth for England, and other ventures he hath, squandered abroad. But ships are but boards, sailors but men: there be land-rats and water-rats, water-thieves and land-thieves, I mean pirates, and then there is the peril of waters, winds and rocks. The man is, notwithstanding, sufficient. Three thousand ducats; I think I may take his bond.

Bass. Be assured you may.

Shy. I will be assured I may; and, that I may 30 be assured, I will bethink me. May I speak with Antonio?

Bass. If it please you to dine with us.

Shy. Yes, to smell pork; to eat of the habitation which your prophet the Nazarite conjured the devil into. I will buy with you, sell with you, talk with you, walk with you, and so following, but I will not eat with

LINE 12. *good:* of good credit. 19. *Tripolis:* a seaport in Syria which traded with Venice.

you, drink with you, nor pray with you. What news
on the Rialto? Who is he comes here?

40

Enter ANTONIO

Bass. This is Signior Antonio.

Shy. [Aside] How like a fawning publican he
looks!

I hate him for he is a Christian,
But more for that in low simplicity
He lends out money gratis and brings down
The rate of usance here with us in Venice.
If I can catch him once upon the hip,
I will feed fat the ancient grudge I bear him.
He hates our sacred nation, and he rails,
Even there where merchants most do congregate,
On me, my bargains and my well-won thrift,
Which he calls interest. Cursed be my tribe,
If I forgive him!

50

Bass. Shylock, do you hear?

Shy. I am debating of my present store,
And, by the near guess of my memory,
I cannot instantly raise up the gross
Of full three thousand ducats. What of that?
Tubal, a wealthy Hebrew of my tribe,
Will furnish me. But soft! how many months
Do you desire? [To Ant.] Rest you fair, good signior; 60
Your worship was the last man in our mouths.

LINE 42. *Aside.* A good example of the Shakespearian use of the soliloquy. While Bassanio is greeting Antonio and they talk, Shylock turns his back on them, pretending to be absorbed in his reflections. 42. *fawning publican:* publican was a common term of contempt; possibly *fawning* was suggested by Antonio's friendly manner to Bassanio. 43-44. *for, for that:* because. 46. *usance:* usury. 60. "Here turn and with pretended surprise at Antonio's presence, uncover and address him obsequiously but with a touch of irony." — Booth. *Rest you fair* was a conventional greeting similar to the "God rest you merry" of the Christmas carol.



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Shylock: How like a fawning publican he looks!
I hate him for he is a Christian.

Ant. Shylock, although I neither lend nor borrow
By taking nor by giving of excess,
Yet, to supply the ripe wants of my friend,
I'll break a custom. Is he yet possess'd
How much ye would?

Shy. Ay, ay, three thousand ducats.

Ant. And for three months.

Shy. I had forgot; three months; you told me so.
Well then, your bond; and let me see; but hear
you;

Methought you said you neither lend nor borrow 70
Upon advantage.

Ant. I do never use it.

Shy. When Jacob grazed his uncle Laban's
sheep —

This Jacob from our holy Abram was,
As his wise mother wrought in his behalf,
The third possessor; ay, he was the third —

Ant. And what of him? did he take interest?

Shy. No, not take interest, not, as you would say,
Directly interest: mark what Jacob did.

When Laban and himself were compromised
That all the eanlings which were streak'd and pied 80
Should fall as Jacob's hire,
The skilful shepherd pilled me certain wands
And stuck them up before the fulsome ewes,
Who then conceiving did in eaning time
Fall parti-colour'd lambs, and those were Jacob's.
This was a way to thrive, and he was blest: 90
And thrift is blessing, if men steal it not.

LINE 63. *excess*: amount over the sum lent, or, interest.
65. *possess'd*: informed. 72. The story is found in *Genesis*, xxvii–xxx. 75. *possessor*: heir. 79. *compromised*: agreed. 80. *eanlings*: little lambs. 82. *pilled*: peeled. The use of the dative *me* was an idiom of the day.

Ant. This was a venture, sir, that Jacob served
for;

A thing not in his power to bring to pass,
But sway'd and fashion'd by the hand of heaven.
Was this inserted to make interest good?
Or is your gold and silver ewes and rams?

Shy. I cannot tell; I make it breed as fast:
But note me, signior.

Ant. Mark you this, Bassanio,
The devil can cite Scripture for his purpose.
An evil soul producing holy witness
Is like a villain with a smiling cheek,
A goodly apple rotten at the heart:
O, what a goodly outside falsehood hath!

Shy. Three thousand ducats; 'tis a good round
sum.

Three months from twelve; then, let me see; the
rate —

Ant. Well, Shylock, shall we be beholding to you?

Shy. Signior Antonio, many a time and oft
In the Rialto you have rated me
About my moneys and my usances:
Still have I borne it with a patient shrug,
For sufferance is the badge of all our tribe.
You call me misbeliever, cut-throat dog,
And spit upon my Jewish gaberdine,
And all for use of that which is mine own.

Well then, it now appears you need my help:
Go to, then; you come to me, and you say
“Shylock, we would have moneys:” you say so;
You, that did void your rheum upon my beard
And foot me as you spurn a stranger cur
Over your threshold: moneys is your suit.

100

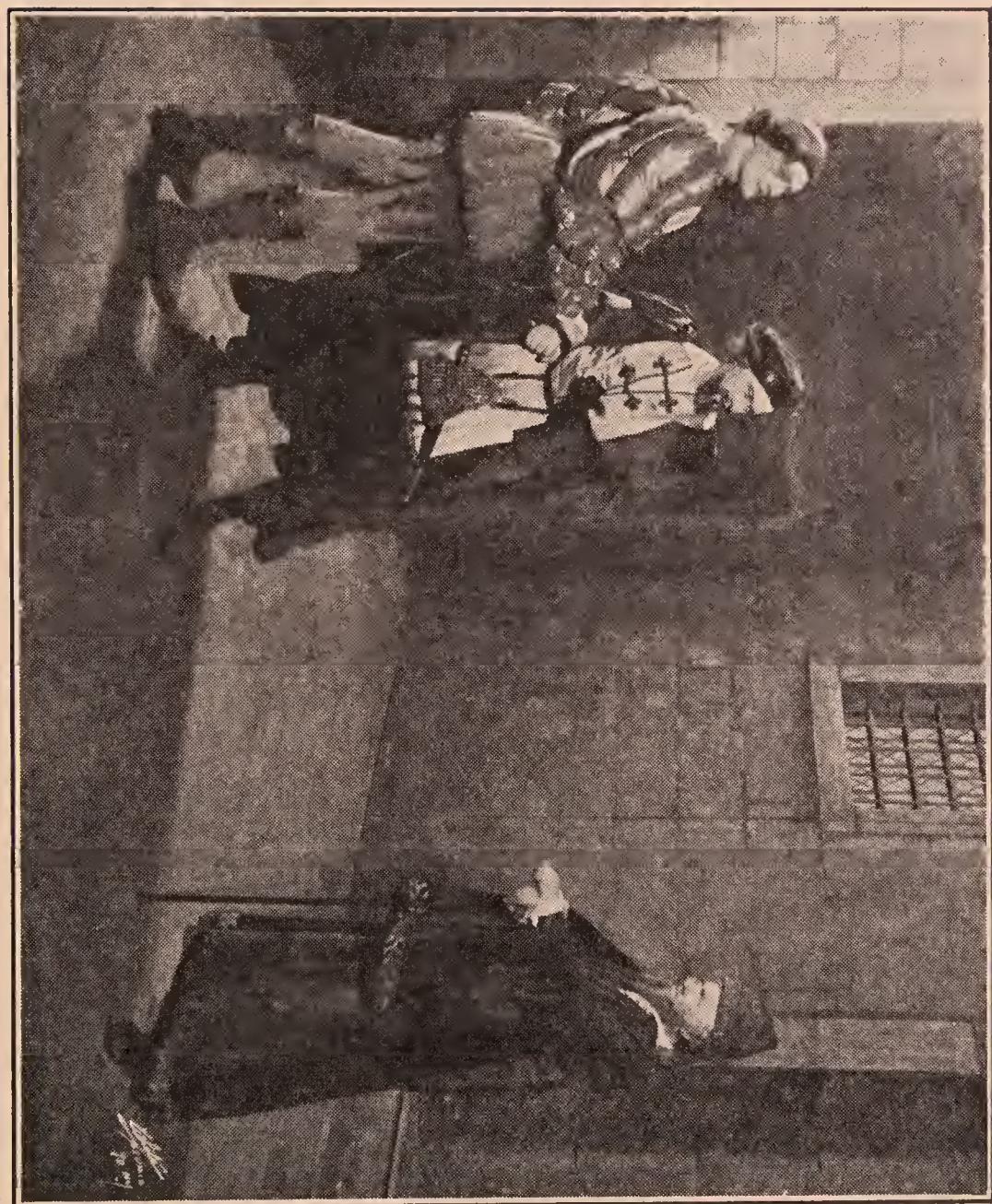
110

120

LINE 97. *breed:* by means of usury. 106. *beholding:* be-helden. 113. *gaberdine:* a long, loose cloak.

Shylock:

Signior Antonio, many
a time and oft
In the Rialto you have
rated me
About my moneys and
my usances.



What should I say to you? Should I not say
 "Hath a dog money? is it possible
 A cur can lend three thousand ducats?" Or
 Shall I bend low and in a bondman's key,
 With bated breath and whispering humbleness,
 Say this:

"Fair sir, you spit on me on Wednesday last;
 You spurn'd me such a day; another time
 You call'd me dog; and for these courtesies
 I'll lend you thus much moneys?"

130

Ant. I am as like to call thee so again,
 To spit on thee again, to spurn thee too.
 If thou wilt lend this money, lend it not
 As to thy friends; for when did friendship take
 A breed for barren metal of his friend?
 But lend it rather to thine enemy,
 Who, if he break, thou mayst with better face
 Exact the penalty.

Shy. Why, look you, how you storm!
 I would be friends with you and have your love,
 Forget the shames that you have stain'd me with, 140
 Supply your present wants and take no doit
 Of usance for my moneys, and you'll not hear me:
 This is kind I offer.

Bass. This were kindness.

Shy. This kindness will I show.
 Go with me to a notary, seal me there
 Your single bond; and, in a merry sport,
 If you repay me not on such a day,
 In such a place, such sum or sums as are
 Express'd in the condition, let the forfeit

LINE 137. *Who*: from whom. 141. *doit*: small coin.
 146. *single*: personal, without endorsers. Shylock is scheming
 to leave no loophole for Antonio, no endorsers to be called on
 in case he forfeits the bond.

Be nominated for an equal pound
 Of your fair flesh, to be cut off and taken
 In what part of your body pleaseth me.

150

Ant. Content, i' faith: I'll seal to such a bond
 And say there is much kindness in the Jew.

Bass. You shall not seal to such a bond for me:
 I'll rather dwell in my necessity.

Ant. Why, fear not, man; I will not forfeit it:
 Within these two months, that's a month before
 This bond expires, I do expect return
 Of thrice three times the value of this bond.

160

Shy. O father Abram, what these Christians are,
 Whose own hard dealings teaches them suspect
 The thoughts of others! Pray you, tell me this;
 If he should break his day, what should I gain
 By the exaction of the forfeiture?

A pound of man's flesh taken from a man
 Is not so estimable, profitable neither,
 As flesh of muttons, beefs, or goats. I say,
 To buy his favour, I extend this friendship:
 If he will take it, so; if not, adieu;

170

And, for my love, I pray you wrong me not.

Ant. Yes, Shylock, I will seal unto this bond.

Shy. Then meet me forthwith at the notary's;
 Give him direction for this merry bond,
 And I will go and purse the ducats straight,
 See to my house, left in the fearful guard
 Of an unthrifty knave, and presently
 I will be with you.

Ant. Hie thee, gentle Jew. [Exit Shylock.
 The Hebrew will turn Christian: he grows kind.

LINE 150. *equal*: equivalent. 162. *teaches*: Early English third person plural. 176. *fearful*: untrustworthy. 178. Booth, as Shylock, waited at one side of the stage until Antonio and Bassanio had gone out, looking back at them with an expression of intense hatred and a menacing gesture. This gave him a most impressive exit.

Bass. I like not fair terms and a villain's mind. 180

Ant. Come on: in this there can be no dismay;
My ships come home a month before the day.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT II

SCENE I — *Belmont. A room in PORTIA's house*

Flourish of cornets. Enter the PRINCE OF MOROCCO and his train;
PORTIA, NERISSA, and others attending

Mor. Mislike me not for my complexion,
The shadow'd livery of the burnish'd sun,
To whom I am a neighbour and near bred.
Bring me the fairest creature northward born,
Where Phœbus' fire scarce thaws the icicles,
And let us make incision for your love,
To prove whose blood is reddest, his or mine.
I tell thee, lady, this aspect of mine
Hath fear'd the valiant: by my love, I swear
The best-regarded virgins of our clime 10
Have loved it too: I would not change this hue,
Except to steal your thoughts, my gentle queen.

Por. In terms of choice I am not solely led
By nice direction of a maiden's eyes;
Besides, the lottery of my destiny
Bars me the right of voluntary choosing:
But if my father had not scanted me
And hedged me by his wit, to yield myself

The First Folio gives the stage direction: "Enter Morochus, a tawny Moore all in white and 3 or 4 followers accordingly."

LINE 1. com-plex-i-on. 8. as-pect. 9. fear'd: made to
fear. 18. wit: wisdom.

His wife who wins me by that means I told you,
 Yourself, renowned prince, then stood as fair
 As any comer I have look'd on yet
 For my affection.

20

Mor. Even for that I thank you:
 Therefore, I pray you, lead me to the caskets
 To try my fortune. By this scimitar
 That slew the Sophy and a Persian prince
 That won three fields of Sultan Solyman,
 I would outstare the sternest eyes that look,
 Outbrave the heart most daring on the earth,
 Pluck the young sucking cubs from the she-bear,
 Yea, mock the lion when he roars for prey,
 To win thee, lady. But, alas the while!
 If Hercules and Lichas play at dice
 Which is the better man, the greater throw
 May turn by fortune from the weaker hand:
 So is Alcides beaten by his page;
 And so may I, blind fortune leading me,
 Miss that which one unworthier may attain,
 And die with grieving.

30

Por. You must take your chance,
 And either not attempt to choose at all
 Or swear before you choose, if you choose wrong
 Never to speak to lady afterward
 In way of marriage: therefore be advised.

40

Mor. Nor will not. Come, bring me unto my
 chance.

Por. First, forward to the temple: after dinner
 Your hazard shall be made.

LINE 19. *His*, meaning *of him*, is the antecedent of *who*.
 25. *Sophy*: Shah of Persia. 26. *Solyman*, the Magnificent, of the
 early sixteenth century. Notice how these Moslem names give
 an oriental effect to this speech. 32. *Lichas*: attendant of Her-
 cules. They play (to decide) which is the better man. 42. *ad-
 vised*: prudent. 43. *Nor will not*: I promise I will not.

Mor. Good fortune then!
To make me blest or cursed'st among men.
[*Cornets, and exeunt.*]

SCENE II — *Venice. A street**Enter LAUNCELOT*

Laun. Certainly my conscience will serve me to run from this Jew my master. The fiend is at mine elbow and tempts me saying to me “Gobbo, Launcelot Gobbo, good Launcelot,” or “good Gobbo,” or “good Launcelot Gobbo, use your legs, take the start, run away.” My conscience says “No; take heed, honest Launcelot; take heed, honest Gobbo,” or, as aforesaid, “honest Launcelot Gobbo; do not run; scorn running with thy heels.” Well, the most courageous 10 fiend bids me pack: “Via!” says the fiend; “away!” says the fiend; “for the heavens, rouse up a brave mind,” says the fiend, “and run.” Well, my conscience, hanging about the neck of my heart, says very wisely to me “My honest friend Launcelot, being an honest man’s son,” or rather an honest woman’s son; for, indeed, my father did something smack, something grow to, he had a kind of taste; well, my conscience says “Launcelot, budge not.” “Budge,” says 20 the fiend. “Budge not,” says my conscience. “Conscience,” say I, “you counsel well;” “Fiend,” say I, “you counsel well:” to be ruled by my conscience, I should stay with the Jew my master, who, God bless the mark, is a kind of devil; and, to run away from

LINE 46. *blest*, for blessedest.

9-10. *scorn running with thy heels*. A quibble, the heels being used for both running and kicking. 11. *via*: away (Italian). 19. *grow to*: phrase applied to milk burnt to the bottom of sauce pan; suggested dishonesty.

the Jew, I should be ruled by the fiend, who, saving your reverence, is the devil himself. Certainly the Jew is the very devil incarnal; and, in my conscience, my conscience is but a kind of hard conscience, to 30 offer to counsel me to stay with the Jew. The fiend gives the more friendly counsel: I will run, fiend; my heels are at your command; I will run.

Enter OLD GOBBO, with a basket

Gob. Master young man, you, I pray you, which is the way to master Jew's?

Laun. [Aside] O heavens, this is my true-be-gotten father! who, being more than sand-blind, high-gravel blind, knows me not: I will try confusions with him.

Gob. Master young gentleman, I pray you, which 40 is the way to master Jew's?

Laun. Turn up on your right hand at the next turning, but at the next turning of all, on your left; marry, at the very next turning, turn of no hand, but turn down indirectly to the Jew's house.

Gob. By God's sonties, 'twill be a hard way to hit. Can you tell me whether one Launcelot, that dwells with him, dwell with him or no?

Laun. Talk you of young Master Launcelot? 50 [Aside] Mark me now; now will I raise the waters. Talk you of young Master Launcelot?

Gob. No master, sir, but a poor man's son: his father, though I say it, is an honest exceeding poor man and, God be thanked, well to live.

LINE 29. *incarnal*: incarnate. The wrong use of words was a favorite form of humor. 37. *sand*: a corruption of *sam*, Old English word for *half*. Gravel-blind would be more than *sand* and less than stone (wholly) blind. 38. *confusions*: conclusions. 44. *marry*: a mild form of swearing by the Virgin Mary. 46. *sonties*: saints or "sanctes." 50. *Master*: title applied only to those able to live without manual labor, with "the port, charge, and countenance of a gentleman."

Laun. Well, let his father be what a' will, we talk of young Master Launcelot.

Gob. Your worship's friend and Launcelot, sir.

Laun. But I pray you, ergo, old man, ergo, I beseech you, talk you of young Master Launcelot? 60

Gob. Of Launcelot, an't please your mastership.

Laun. Ergo, Master Launcelot. Talk not of Master Launcelot, father; for the young gentleman, according to Fates and Destinies and such odd sayings, the Sisters Three and such branches of learning, is indeed deceased, or, as you would say in plain terms, gone to heaven.

Gob. Marry, God forbid! the boy was the very staff of my age, my very prop. 70

Laun. Do I look like a cudgel or a hovel-post, a staff or a prop? Do you know me, father?

Gob. Alack the day, I know you not, young gentleman: but I pray you, tell me, is my boy, God rest his soul, alive or dead?

Laun. Do you not know me, father?

Gob. Alack, sir, I am sand-blind; I know you not.

Laun. Nay, indeed, if you had your eyes, you might fail of the knowing me: it is a wise father that 80 knows his own child. Well, old man, I will tell you news of your son: give me your blessing: truth will come to light; murder cannot be hid long; a man's son may, but at the length truth will out.

Gob. Pray you, sir, stand up: I am sure you are not Launcelot, my boy.

Laun. Pray you, let's have no more fooling about it, but give me your blessing: I am Launcelot, your boy that was, your son that is, your child that shall 90 be.

LINE 56. a': he. 65. Sisters Three: the Fates. 72. father: a common form of address used by the young to elderly persons.

Gob. I cannot think you are my son.

Laun. I know not what I shall think of that: but I am Launcelot, the Jew's man, and I am sure Margery your wife is my mother.

Gob. Her name is Margery, indeed: I'll be sworn, if thou be Launcelot, thou art mine own flesh and blood. Lord worshipped might he be! what a beard hast thou got! thou hast got more hair on thy chin than Dobbin my fill-horse has on his tail. 100

Laun. It should seem, then, that Dobbin's tail grows backward: I am sure he had more hair of his tail than I have of my face when I last saw him.

Gob. Lord, how art thou changed! How dost thou and thy master agree? I have brought him a present. How 'gree you now?

Laun. Well, well: but, for mine own part, as I have set up my rest to run away, so I will not rest till 110 I have run some ground. My master's a very Jew: give him a present! give him a halter: I am famished in his service; you may tell every finger I have with my ribs. Father, I am glad you are come: give me your present to one Master Bassanio, who, indeed, gives rare new liveries: if I serve not him, I will run as far as God has any ground. O rare fortune! here comes the man: to him, father; for I am a Jew, if I serve the Jew any longer. 120

Enter BASSANIO, with LEONARDO and other followers

Bass. You may do so; but let it be so hasted that supper be ready at the farthest by five of the clock.

LINE 98. *beard.* Launcelot, kneeling, is bent over, presenting the back of his head to his father. 100. *fill-*: thill- or shaft-horse. 110. *set up my rest:* backed my luck, a gambling term. 114. *me:* the dative case. 118. *ground.* There was not enough for one to be able to run far on it in Venice.

See these letters delivered; put the liveries to making, and desire Gratiano to come anon to my lodging.

[*Exit a Servant.*

Laun. To him, father.

Gob. God bless your worship!

Bass. Gramercy! wouldest thou aught with me?

Gob. Here's my son, sir, a poor boy, —

Laun. Not a poor boy, sir, but the rich Jew's man;¹³⁰ that would, sir, as my father shall specify —

Gob. He hath a great infection, sir, as one would say, to serve, —

Laun. Indeed, the short and the long is, I serve the Jew, and have a desire, as my father shall specify —

Gob. His master and he, saving your worship's reverence, are scarce cater-cousins —

Laun. To be brief, the very truth is that the Jew,¹⁴⁰ having done me wrong, doth cause me, as my father, being, I hope, an old man, shall frutify unto you —

Gob. I have here a dish of doves that I would bestow upon your worship, and my suit is —

Laun. In very brief, the suit is impertinent to myself, as your worship shall know by this honest old man; and, though I say it, though old man, yet poor man, my father.

Bass. One speak for both. What would you? ¹⁵⁰

Laun. Serve you, sir.

Gob. That is the very defect of the matter, sir.

Bass. I know thee well; thou hast obtain'd thy suit:

Shylock thy master spoke with me this day,
And hath preferr'd thee, if it be preferment

LINE 128. *Gramercy*: literally "many thanks," but used commonly to express astonishment. 132. *infection*: affection, desire. 139. *cater-cousins*: friendly persons. 143. *dish of doves*: a common present for countrymen to make.

To leave a rich Jew's service, to become
The follower of so poor a gentleman.

Laun. The old proverb is very well parted between
my master Shylock and you, sir: you have the grace
of God, sir, and he hath enough. 160

Bass. Thou speak'st it well. Go, father, with thy
son.

Take leave of thy old master and inquire
My lodging out. Give him a livery
More guarded than his fellows': see it done.

Laun. Father, in. I cannot get a service, no; I
have ne'er a tongue in my head. Well, if any man in
Italy have a fairer table which doth offer to swear
upon a book, I shall have good fortune. Go to, here's
a simple line of life: here's a small trifle of wives: alas,
fifteen wives is nothing! eleven widows and nine maids 170
is a simple coming-in for one man: and then to 'scape
drowning thrice, and to be in peril of my life with the
edge of a feather-bed; here are simple scapes. Well,
if Fortune be a woman, she's a good wench for this
gear. Father, come; I'll take my leave of the Jew in
the twinkling of an eye.

[*Exeunt Launcelot and Old Gobbo.*

Bass. I pray thee, good Leonardo, think on this:
These things being bought and orderly bestow'd,
Return in haste, for I do feast to-night 180
My best-esteem'd acquaintance: hie thee, go.

Leon. My best endeavours shall be done herein.

LINE 158. *old proverb*: "The grace of God is geir enough." 164. *guarded*: ornamented, striped. 167. *table*: in palmistry, the palm of the extended hand. The "line of life" was the line around the ball of the thumb or the "Mount of Venus," and deep lines running between the two indicated the number of wives a man would have. 178. While the Gobbos talked, Bassanio had been giving orders to his servant. He now comes to the center of the stage.

Enter GRATIANO

Gra. Where is your master?

Leon. Yonder, sir, he walks. [Exit.]

Gra. Signior Bassanio!

Bass. Gratiano!

Gra. I have a suit to you.

Bass. You have obtain'd it.

Gra. You must not deny me: I must go with you to Belmont.

Bass. Why, then you must. But hear thee, Gratiano;

Thou art too wild, too rude and bold of voice; 190

Parts that become thee happily enough

And in such eyes as ours appear not faults;

But where thou art not known, why, there they show

Something too liberal. Pray thee, take pain

To allay with some cold drops of modesty

Thy skipping spirit, lest through thy wild behaviour

I be misconstrued in the place I go to

And lose my hopes.

Gra. Signior Bassanio, hear me:
If I do not put on a sober habit,
Talk with respect and swear but now and then, 200
Wear prayer-books in my pocket, look demurely,
Nay more, while grace is saying, hood mine eyes
Thus with my hat; and sigh and say "amen,"
Use all the observance of civility,
Like one well studied in a sad ostent
To please his grandam, never trust me more.

Bass. Well, we shall see your bearing.

LINE 190. Notice that *thou* is used for *you* in this scene in the French fashion, that is, in speaking to dependents, children, and intimate friends informally. 203. It was the mode to wear hats at dinner. 205. *sad ostent*: grave manner.

Gra. Nay, but I bar to-night: you shall not
gauge me
By what we do to-night.

Bass. No, that were pity:
I would entreat you rather to put on
Your boldest suit of mirth, for we have friends
That purpose merriment. But fare you well:
I have some business.

210

Gra. And I must to Lorenzo and the rest:
But we will visit you at supper-time. [Exeunt.

SCENE III — *The same. A room in SHYLOCK's house*

Enter JESSICA and LAUNCELOT

Jes. I am sorry thou wilt leave my father so:
Our house is hell, and thou, a merry devil,
Didst rob it of some taste of tediousness.
But fare thee well, there is a ducat for thee:
And, Launcelot, soon at supper shalt thou see
Lorenzo, who is thy new master's guest:
Give him this letter; do it secretly;
And so farewell: I would not have my father
See me in talk with thee.

Laun. Adieu! tears exhibit my tongue. Most 10
beautiful pagan, most sweet Jew! But, adieu: these
foolish drops do something drown my manly spirit:
adieu.

Jes. Farewell, good Launcelot. [Exit Launcelot.
Alack, what heinous sin is it in me
To be ashamed to be my father's child!
But though I am a daughter to his blood,
I am not to his manners. O Lorenzo,
If thou keep promise, I shall end this strife,
Become a Christian and thy loving wife. [Exit.

20

LINE 19. *manners*: ways of life, as in “manners and customs.”

SCENE IV — *The same. A street*

Enter GRATIANO, LORENZO, SALARINO, and SALANIO

Lor. Nay, we will slink away in supper-time,
Disguise us at my lodging and return,
All in an hour.

Gra. We have not made good preparation.

Salar. We have not spoke us yet of torch-bearers.

Salan. 'Tis vile, unless it may be quaintly order'd,
And better in my mind not undertook.

Lor. 'Tis now but four o'clock: we have two hours
To furnish us.

Enter LAUNCELOT, with a letter

Friend Launcelot, what's the news?

Laun. An it shall please you to break up this, it ¹⁰
shall seem to signify.

Lor. I know the hand: in faith, 'tis a fair hand;
And whiter than the paper it writ on
Is the fair hand that writ.

Gra. Love-news, in faith.

Laun. By your leave, sir.

Lor. Whither goest thou?

Laun. Marry, sir, to bid my old master the Jew to
sup to-night with my new master the Christian.

Lor. Hold here, take this: tell gentle Jessica 20
I will not fail her; speak it privately.

Go, gentlemen, [Exit Launcelot.]
Will you prepare you for this masque to-night?
I am provided of a torch-bearer.

LINE 5. *spoke of*: spoken for, engaged. 5. *us*: for us (dative).
6. *quaintly*: prettily. 10. *break up*: break the seal. 22. Ben
Greet has effective stage business here: "Lorenzo gives him
a coin. Launcelot is getting rich. He tosses it, bows, and goes
across to R.C. He here bumps, bowing, accidentally against Gra-
tiano. He turns, hints that his injuries deserve a tip, but not getting
one, he walks in a very dignified manner across stage to house, makes
an elaborate bow and exits. All laugh as he goes off, then consult
together." 24. *of*: with.

Salar. Ay, marry, I'll be gone about it straight.

Salan. And so will I.

Lor. Meet me and Gratiano
At Gratiano's lodging some hour hence.

Salar. 'Tis good we do so.

[*Exeunt Salar. and Salan.*

Gra. Was not that letter from fair Jessica?

Lor. I must needs tell thee all. She hath directed 30
How I shall take her from her father's house,
What gold and jewels she is furnish'd with,
What page's suit she hath in readiness.
If e'er the Jew her father come to heaven,
It will be for his gentle daughter's sake:
And never dare misfortune cross her foot,
Unless she do it under this excuse,
That she is issue to a faithless Jew.
Come, go with me; peruse this as thou goest:
Fair Jessica shall be my torch-bearer.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE V — *The same. Before SHYLOCK's house*

Enter SHYLOCK and LAUNCELOT

Shy. Well, thou shalt see, thy eyes shall be thy
judge,
The difference of old Shylock and Bassanio: —
What, Jessica! — thou shalt not gormandise,
As thou hast done with me: — What, Jessica! —
And sleep and snore, and rend apparel out; —
Why, Jessica, I say!

Laun. Why, Jessica!

Shy. Who bids thee call? I do not bid thee call.

Laun. Your worship was wont to tell me that I
could do nothing without bidding.

LINE 37. *she*: Misfortune, personified. 38. *faithless*: lacking
the true faith.

2. *of*: between,

Enter JESSICA

Jes. Call you? what is your will?

10

Shy. I am bid forth to supper, Jessica:
There are my keys. But wherefore should I go?
I am not bid for love; they flatter me:
But yet I'll go in hate, to feed upon
The prodigal Christian. Jessica, my girl,
Look to my house. I am right loath to go:
There is some ill a-brewing towards my rest,
For I did dream of money-bags to-night.

Laun. I beseech you, sir, go: my young master
doth expect your reproach.

20

Shy. So do I his.

Laun. And they have conspired together, I will
not say you shall see a masque; but if you do, then
it was not for nothing that my nose fell a-bleeding
on Black-Monday last at six o'clock i' the morning,
falling out that year on Ash-Wednesday was four year,
in the afternoon.

Shy. What, are there masques? Hear you me,
Jessica:

Lock up my doors; and when you hear the drum
And the vile squealing of the wry-neck'd fife,
Clamber not you up to the casements then,
Nor thrust your head into the public street

30

LINE 12. *my keys.* Dramatic irony. While he is offering them, the audience knows that she will use them to steal from him. 16. His presentiment of evil reminds us of Antonio's, Act I. 1. 18. *to-night:* last night. 25. *Black-Monday.* On Easter Monday, April 14, 1360, "King Edward with his host lay before the cattie of Paris: which day was full darke of mist and haile, and so bitter cold that many men died on their horses backs with the cold. Wherefore unto this day it hath been called Blacke Monday." — Stow. 28. *masques:* short plays or pageants played in masks. 30. *wry-neck'd fife:* "A fife is a wry-neckt musician, for he always looks away from his instrument." — Rich's *Aphorisms*.

To gaze on Christian fools with varnish'd faces,
 But stop my house's ears, I mean my casements:
 Let not the sound of shallow foppery enter
 My sober house. By Jacob's staff, I swear,
 I have no mind of feasting forth to-night:
 But I will go. Go you before me, sirrah;
 Say I will come.

Laun. I will go before, sir. Mistress, look out at 40
 window, for all this;

There will come a Christian by,
 Will be worth a Jewess' eye. [Exit.

Shy. What says that fool of Hagar's offspring,
 ha?

Jes. His words were "Farewell mistress;" nothing
 else.

Shy. The patch is kind enough, but a huge feeder;
 Snail-slow in profit, and he sleeps by day
 More than the wild-cat; drones hive not with me;
 Therefore I part with him, and part with him
 To one that I would have him help to waste
 His borrow'd purse. Well, Jessica, go in:
 Perhaps I will return immediately:
 Do as I bid you; shut doors after you:
 Fast bind, fast find;

A proverb never stale in thrifty mind. [Exit.

Jes. Farewell; and if my fortune be not crost,
 I have a father, you a daughter, lost. [Exit.

LINE 33. *varnish'd faces:* probably refers to painted masks.
 43. *Jewess'*. An old saying "worth a Jew's eye" meant something valuable. 44. *Hagar*, the maid of Sarah, Abraham's wife, ran away from service. 46. *patch:* wearer of motley, hence a term of contempt. 52. Note Shylock's suspicions and how he forbids her all youthful pleasures, — her best excuse. 54-57. The rhymes mark the end of the scene.

SCENE VI — *The Same*

Enter GRATIANO and SALARINO masqued

Gra. This is the pent-house under which Lorenzo
Desired us to make stand.

Salar. His hour is almost past.

Gra. And it is marvel he out-dwells his hour,
For lovers ever run before the clock.

Salar. O, ten times faster Venus' pigeons fly
To seal love's bonds new-made, than they are wont
To keep obliged faith unforfeited!

Gra. That ever holds: who riseth from a feast
With that keen appetite that he sits down?
Where is the horse that doth untread again
His tedious measures with the unbated fire
That he did pace them first? All things that are,
Are with more spirit chased than enjoy'd.

How like a younker or a prodigal
The scarfed bark puts from her native bay,
Hugg'd and embraced by the wanton wind!
How like the prodigal doth she return,
With over-weather'd ribs and ragged sails,
Lean, rent and beggar'd by the wanton wind!

Salar. Here comes Lorenzo: more of this here-
after.

Enter LORENZO

Lor. Sweet friends, your patience for my long
abode;
Not I, but my affairs, have made you wait:
When you shall please to play the thieves for wives,

In some editions there is no scene division here. There is, of course, no change of scene; but on the stage, to indicate the passage of time, maskers enter with music and sometimes dancing. It is growing dusk, so lights appear here and there.

LINE 5. Venus' chariot was drawn by doves. 15. *scarfed:* be-flagged.

I'll watch as long for you then. Approach;
Here dwells my father Jew. Ho! who's within?

Enter JESSICA, above, in boy's clothes

Jes. Who are you? Tell me, for more certainty,
Albeit I'll swear that I do know your tongue.

Lor. Lorenzo, and thy love.

Jes. Lorenzo, certain, and my love indeed,
For who love I so much? And now who knows 30
But you, Lorenzo, whether I am yours?

Lor. Heaven and thy thoughts are witness that
thou art.

Jes. Here, catch this casket; it is worth the pains.
I am glad 'tis night, you do not look on me,
For I am much ashamed of my exchange:
But love is blind and lovers cannot see
The pretty follies that themselves commit;
For if they could, Cupid himself would blush
To see me thus transformed to a boy.

Lor. Descend, for you must be my torch-bearer. 40

Jes. What, must I hold a candle to my shames?
They in themselves, good sooth, are too too light.
Why, 'tis an office of discovery, love;
And I should be obscured.

Lor. So are you, sweet,
Even in the lovely garnish of a boy.
But come at once;
For the close night doth play the runaway,
And we are stay'd for at Bassanio's feast.

Jes. I will make fast the doors, and gild myself
With some more ducats, and be with you straight. 50

[*Exit above.*

LINE 24. *I'll watch / as long / for you / then.* (Pause) / *Ap-*
proach. / 25. *above:* on a balcony. 35. *exchange:* change of
dress. 42. *light:* possibly either *bright* or *frivolous.* 47. *close:*
concealing.

Gra. Now, by my hood, a Gentile and no Jew.

Lor. Beshrew me but I love her heartily;
For she is wise, if I can judge of her,
And fair she is, if that mine eyes be true,
And true she is, as she hath proved herself,
And therefore, like herself, wise, fair and true,
Shall she be placed in my constant soul.

Enter JESSICA, below

What, art thou come? On, gentlemen; away!
Our masquing mates by this time for us stay.

[*Exit with Jessica and Salarino.*

Enter ANTONIO

Ant. Who's there?

Gra. Signior Antonio!

60

Ant. Fie, fie, Gratiano! where are all the rest?
'Tis nine o'clock: our friends all stay for you.
No masque to-night: the wind is come about;
Bassanio presently will go aboard:
I have sent twenty out to seek for you.

Gra. I am glad on't: I desire no more delight
Than to be under sail and gone to-night. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VII — *Belmont. A room in PORTIA's house*

Flourish of cornets. *Enter PORTIA, with the PRINCE OF MOROCCO,*
and their trains

Por. Go, draw aside the curtains and discover
The several caskets to this noble prince.
Now make your choice.

Mor. The first, of gold, who this inscription bears,
“Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire;”

LINE 51. *hood*, of his masking costume, possibly a monk's frock.
64. *presently*: at once. 66. *on*, used for “of.”

4. *who* and *which* were interchangeable.

The second, silver, which this promise carries,
“Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves;”
This third, dull lead, with warning all as blunt,
“Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath.”
How shall I know if I do choose the right? 10

Por. The one of them contains my picture, prince:
If you choose that, then I am yours withal.

Mor. Some god direct my judgement! Let me
see;

I will survey the inscriptions back again.

What says this leaden casket?

“Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he
hath.”

Must give: for what? for lead? hazard for lead?

This casket threatens. Men that hazard all

Do it in hope of fair advantages:

A golden mind stoops not to shows of dross;

I'll then nor give nor hazard aught for lead. 20

What says the silver with her virgin hue?

“Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves.”

As much as he deserves! Pause there, Morocco,

And weigh thy value with an even hand:

If thou be'st rated by thy estimation,

Thou dost deserve enough; and yet enough

May not extend so far as to the lady:

And yet to be afeard of my deserving

Were but a weak disabling of myself. 30

As much as I deserve! Why, that's the lady:

I do in birth deserve her, and in fortunes,

In graces and in qualities of breeding;

But more than these, in love I do deserve.

What if I stray'd no further, but chose here?

Let's see once more this saying graved in gold;

“Who chooseth me shall gain what many men
desire.”

Why, that's the lady; all the world desires her;
 From the four corners of the earth they come,
 To kiss this shrine, this mortal breathing saint:
40
 The Hyrcanian deserts and the vasty wilds
 Of wide Arabia are as throughfares now
 For princes to come view fair Portia:
 The watery kingdom, whose ambitious head
 Spits in the face of heaven, is no bar
 To stop the foreign spirits, but they come,
 As o'er a brook, to see fair Portia.

One of these three contains her heavenly picture.
 Is't like that lead contains her? 'Twere damnation
 To think so base a thought: it were too gross
50
 To rib her cerecloth in the obscure grave.
 Or shall I think in silver she's immured,
 Being ten times undervalued to tried gold?
 O sinful thought! Never so rich a gem
 Was set in worse than gold. They have in England
 A coin that bears the figure of an angel
 Stamped in gold, but that's insculp'd upon;
 But here an angel in a golden bed
 Lies all within. Deliver me the key:
 Here do I choose, and thrive I as I may!

Por. There, take it, prince; and if my form lie
 there,

Then I am yours. *[He unlocks the golden casket.]*

Mor. O hell! what have we here?
 A carrion Death, within whose empty eye
 There is a written scroll! I'll read the writing.

LINE 41. *Hyrcanian deserts*: south of the Caspian Sea, where tigers live. Notice the oriental exaggeration in this speech, the names of unknown, distant places which give it a romantic, foreign air, and its lyrical reiteration of Portia's name. 51. *rib her cerecloth*: inclose her shroud. *Cerecloth* was a plaster made of wax. 51. *obscure*: dark. 56. *angel*: a gold coin stamped with the figure of St. Michael, worth about ten shillings. 63. *carrion Death*: skull.

[Reads] All that glisters is not gold;
 Often have you heard that told:
 Many a man his life hath sold
 But my outside to behold:
 Gilded tombs do worms infold.
 Had you been as wise as bold,
 Young in limbs, in judgement old,
 Your answer had not been inscroll'd:
 Fare you well; your suit is cold.
 Cold, indeed; and labour lost:
 Then, farewell, heat, and welcome, frost!
 Portia, adieu. I have too grieved a heart
 To take a tedious leave: thus losers part.
 [Exit with his train. *Flourish of cornets.*
Por. A gentle riddance. Draw the curtains, go.
 Let all of his complexion choose me so. [Exeunt.

70

SCENE VIII — *Venice. A street**Enter SALARINO and SALANIO*

Salar. Why, man, I saw Bassanio under sail:
 With him is Gratiano gone along;
 And in their ship I am sure Lorenzo is not.

Salan. The villain Jew with outcries raised the duke,
 Who went with him to search Bassanio's ship.

Salar. He came too late, the ship was under sail:
 But there the duke was given to understand
 That in a gondola were seen together
 Lorenzo and his amorous Jessica:
 Besides, Antonio certified the duke
 They were not with Bassanio in his ship.

10

LINE 75. *welcome, frost!* “Farewell, frost!” was a common remark when something unpleasant departed.

Salan. I never heard a passion so confused,
 So strange, outrageous, and so variable,
 As the dog Jew did utter in the streets:
 "My daughter! O my ducats! O my daughter!
 Fled with a Christian! O my Christian ducats!
 Justice! the law! my ducats, and my daughter!
 A sealed bag, two sealed bags of ducats,
 Of double ducats, stolen from me by my daughter!
 And jewels, two stones, two rich and precious stones, 20
 Stolen by my daughter! Justice! find the girl;
 She hath the stones upon her, and the ducats."

Salar. Why, all the boys in Venice follow him,
 Crying, his stones, his daughter, and his ducats.

Salan. Let good Antonio look he keep his day,
 Or he shall pay for this.

Salar. Marry, well remember'd.
 I reason'd with a Frenchman yesterday,
 Who told me, in the narrow seas that part
 The French and English, there miscarried
 A vessel of our country richly fraught: 30
 I thought upon Antonio when he told me;
 And wish'd in silence that it were not his.

Salan. You were best to tell Antonio what you
 hear;

Yet do not suddenly, for it may grieve him.

Salar. A kinder gentleman treads not the earth.
 I saw Bassanio and Antonio part:
 Bassanio told him he would make some speed
 Of his return: he answer'd, "Do not so;
 Slubber not business for my sake, Bassanio,
 But stay the very riping of the time; 40
 And for the Jew's bond which he hath of me,
 Let it not enter in your mind of love:

LINE 27. *reason'd*: conversed. 33. *you were best*: it would be
 best for you. 39. *slubber*: slight.

Be merry, and employ your chiefest thoughts
 To courtship and such fair ostents of love
 As shall conveniently become you there:"
 And even there, his eye being big with tears,
 Turning his face, he put his hand behind him,
 And with affection wondrous sensible
 He wrung Bassanio's hand; and so they parted.

Salan. I think he only loves the world for him. 50
 I pray thee, let us go and find him out
 And quicken his embraced heaviness
 With some delight or other.

Salar. Do we so. [Exeunt.

SCENE IX — *Belmont. A room in PORTIA'S house*

Enter NERISSA with a Servitor

Ner. Quick, quick, I pray thee; draw the curtain
 straight:
 The Prince of Arragon hath ta'en his oath,
 And comes to his election presently.

*Flourish of cornets. Enter the PRINCE OF ARRAGON, PORTIA,
 and their trains*

Por. Behold, there stand the caskets, noble prince:
 If you choose that wherein I am contain'd,
 Straight shall our nuptial rites be solemnized:
 But if you fail, without more speech, my lord,
 You must be gone from hence immediately.

Ar. I am enjoin'd by oath to observe three things:
 First, never to unfold to any one 10
 Which casket 'twas I chose; next, if I fail
 Of the right casket, never in my life
 To woo a maid in way of marriage:

LINE 44. *ostents*: shows. 48. *sensible*: moved. 52. *embraced*
heaviness: sadness which he hugs to himself.

Lastly,
If I do fail in fortune of my choice,
Immediately to leave you and be gone.

Por. To these injunctions every one doth swear
That comes to hazard for my worthless self.

Ar. And so have I address'd me. Fortune now
To my heart's hope! Gold; silver; and base lead. 20
"Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath."

You shall look fairer, ere I give or hazard.
What says the golden chest? ha! let me see:
"Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire."
What many men desire! that "many" may be meant
By the fool multitude, that choose by show,
Not learning more than the fond eye doth teach;
Which pries not to the interior, but, like the martlet,
Builds in the weather on the outward wall,
Even in the force and road of casualty. 30

I will not choose what many men desire,
Because I will not jump with common spirits
And rank me with the barbarous multitudes.
Why, then to thee, thou silver treasure-house;
Tell me once more what title thou dost bear:

"Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves."
And well said too; for who shall go about
To cozen fortune and be honourable
Without the stamp of merit? Let none presume
To wear an undeserved dignity. 40

O, that estates, degrees and offices
Were not derived corruptly, and that clear honour
Were purchased by the merit of the wearer!
How many then should cover that stand bare!
How many be commanded that command!
How much low peasantry would then be glean'd

LINE 19. *address'd*: prepared. 44. *cover*: keep their hats on.
44. *bare*: bareheaded.

From the true seed of honour! and how much honour
 Pick'd from the chaff and ruin of the times
 To be new-varnish'd! Well, but to my choice:
 "Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves." 50
 I will assume desert. Give me a key for this,
 And instantly unlock my fortunes here.

[*He opens the silver casket.*

Por. Too long a pause for that which you find there.

Ar. What's here? the portrait of a blinking idiot,

Presenting me a schedule! I will read it.

How much unlike art thou to Portia!

How much unlike my hopes and my deservings!

"Who chooseth me shall have as much as he deserves."

Did I deserve no more than a fool's head?

Is that my prize? are my deserts no better? 60

Por. To offend, and judge, are distinct offices
 And of opposed natures.

Ar. What is here?

[*Reads*] The fire seven times tried this:

Seven times tried that judgement is,
 That did never choose amiss.

Some there be that shadows kiss;

Such have but a shadow's bliss:

There be fools alive, I wis,

Silver'd o'er; and so was this.

I will ever be your head:

So be gone: you are sped. 71

Still more fool I shall appear
 By the time I linger here:

LINES 61-62. Portia means that he should not expect to be the judge of his own case. 68. *I wis*: corruption of *ywiss*, certainly.

With one fool's head I came to woo,
 But I go away with two.
 Sweet, adieu. I'll keep my oath,
 Patiently to bear my wroth.

[*Exeunt Arragon and train.*]

Por. Thus hath the candle singed the moth.
 O, these deliberate fools! when they do choose,
 They have the wisdom by their wit to lose. 80

Ner. The ancient saying is no heresy.
 Hanging and wiving goes by destiny.

Por. Come, draw the curtain, Nerissa.

Enter a Servant

Serv. Where is my lady?

Por. Here: what would my lord?

Serv. Madam, there is alighted at your gate
 A young Venetian, one that comes before
 To signify the approaching of his lord;
 From whom he bringeth sensible regrets,
 To wit, besides commands and courteous breath,
 Gifts of rich value. Yet I have not seen
 So likely an ambassador of love:
 A day in April never came so sweet,
 To show how costly summer was at hand,
 As this fore-spurrer comes before his lord. 90

Por. No more, I pray thee: I am half afeard
 Thou wilt say anon he is some kin to thee,
 Thou spend'st such high-day wit in praising him.
 Come, come, Nerissa; for I long to see
 Quick Cupid's post that comes so mannerly. 100

Ner. Bassanio, lord Love, if thy will it be!

[*Exeunt.*]

LINE 85. *my lord.* Portia is mimicking the servant's "my lady." She is in high spirits, having got rid of her undesired suitors. 89. *sensible regrets:* greetings with substance to them, gifts. 98. *high-day:* holiday.

ACT III

SCENE I — *Venice. A street**Enter SALANIO and SALARINO*

Salan. Now, what news on the Rialto?

Salar. Why, yet it lives there unchecked that Antonio hath a ship of rich lading wrecked on the narrow seas: the Goodwins, I think they call the place; a very dangerous flat and fatal, where the carcasses of many a tall ship lie buried, as they say, if my gossip Report be an honest woman of her word.

Salan. I would she were as lying a gossip in that as ever knapped ginger or made her neighbours believe ¹⁰ she wept for the death of a third husband. But it is true, without any slips of prolixity or crossing the plain highway of talk, that the good Antonio, the honest Antonio, — O that I had a title good enough to keep his name company! —

Salar. Come, the full stop.

Salan. Ha! what sayest thou? Why, the end is, he hath lost a ship.

Salar. I would it might prove the end of his losses. ²⁰

Salan. Let me say “amen” betimes, lest the devil cross my prayer, for here he comes in the likeness of a Jew.

Enter SHYLOCK

How now, Shylock! what news among the merchants?

Shy. You knew, none so well, none so well as you, of my daughter’s flight.

The nine scenes of Act II have brought the time of the action to within a fortnight of the maturity of the bond.

LINE 2. *it*: refers to the rumor. 4. *Goodwins*: Goodwin Sands, off the Kentish coast. 10. *knapped*: gnawed. *Enter SHYLOCK*. The loss of his daughter, the jeering of the boys on the street, the importunities of all Antonio’s friends, even to the Doge himself, and the near approach of his time for revenge, have evidently brought him close to hysteria.

Salar. That's certain: I, for my part, knew the tailor that made the wings she flew withal. 30

Salan. And Shylock, for his own part, knew the bird was fledged; and then it is the complexion of them all to leave the dam.

Shy. She is damned for it.

Salar. That's certain, if the devil may be her judge.

Shy. My own flesh and blood to rebel!

Salan. Out upon it, old carrion! rebels it at these years?

Shy. I say, my daughter is my flesh and blood. 40

Salar. There is more difference between thy flesh and hers than between jet and ivory; more between your bloods than there is between red wine and rhenish. But tell us, do you hear whether Antonio have had any loss at sea or no?

Shy. There I have another bad match: a bankrupt, a prodigal, who dare scarce show his head on the Rialto; a beggar, that was used to come so smug upon the mart; let him look to his bond: he was wont to call me usurer; let him look to his bond: he was wont to lend money for a Christian courtesy; let him look to his bond. 50

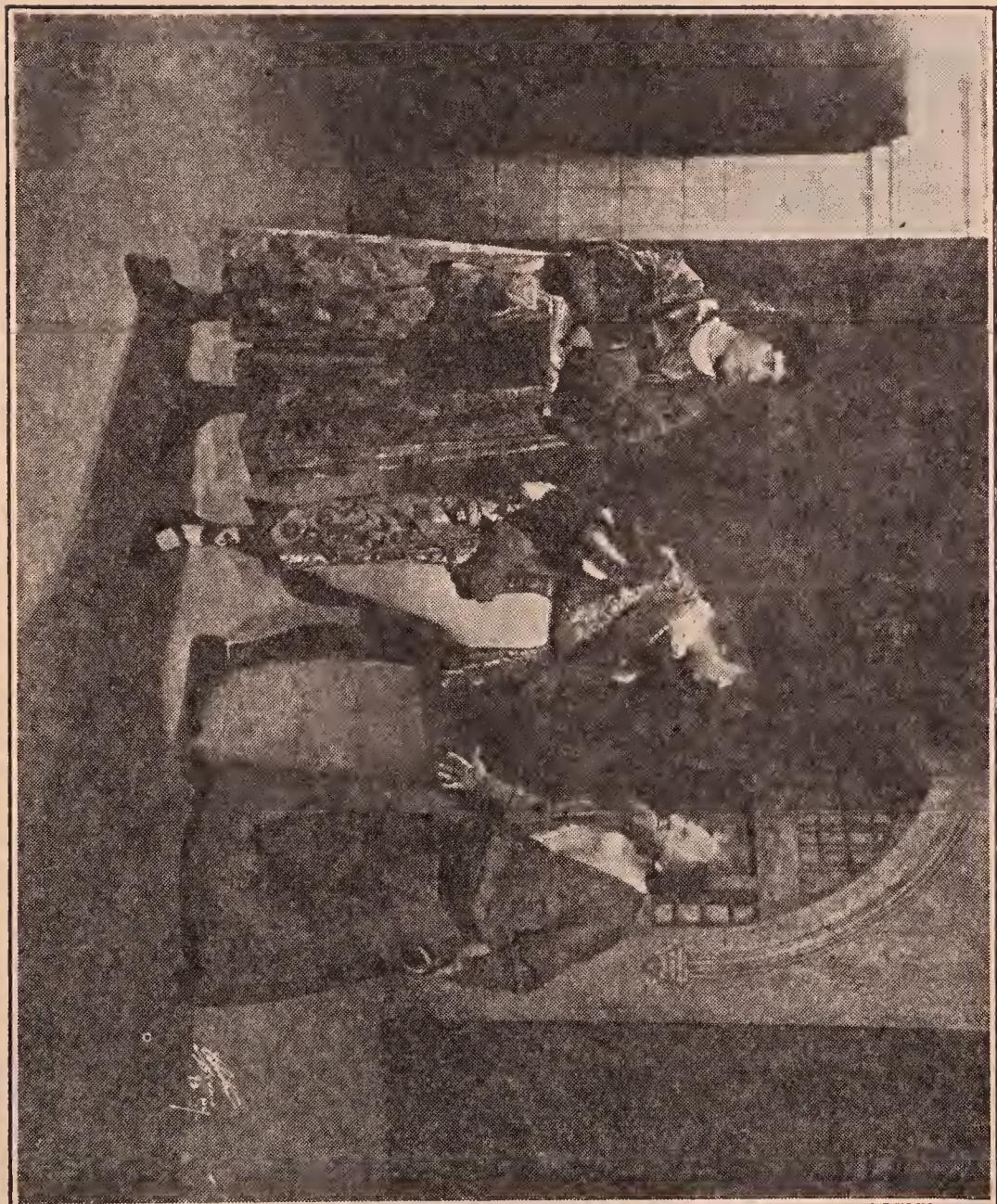
Salar. Why, I am sure, if he forfeit, thou wilt not take his flesh: what's that good for?

Shy. To bait fish withal: if it will feed nothing else, it will feed my revenge. He hath disgraced me, and hindered me half a million; laughed at my losses, mocked at my gains, scorned my nation, thwarted

LINE 30. *wings*, i.e., the page's dress. 32. *complexion*: nature. 43. *rhenish*: a white wine. 56-76. This speech states Shylock's motive, hate inspired by his wrongs, and his purpose, revenge. When recited by a great actor, it has a terrible grandeur.

Salario: Why, I am
sure, if he forfeit, thou
wilt not take his flesh:
what's that good for?

Shylock: To bait fish
withal: if it will feed
nothing else, it will feed
my revenge.



my bargains, cooled my friends, heated mine enemies; and what's his reason? I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew 60 eyes? hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer, as a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed? if you tickle us, do we not laugh? if you poison us, do we not die? and if you wrong us, shall we not revenge? If we are like you in the rest, 70 we will resemble you in that. If a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his humility? Revenge. If a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be by Christian example? Why, revenge. The villany you teach me, I will execute, and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction.

Enter a Servant

Serv. Gentlemen, my master Antonio is at his house and desires to speak with you both.

Salar. We have been up and down to seek him.

Enter TUBAL

Salan. Here comes another of the tribe: a third 80 cannot be matched, unless the devil himself turn Jew. [Exeunt *Salan.*, *Salar.*, and *Servant*.]

Shy. How now, Tubal! what news from Genoa? hast thou found my daughter?

Tub. I often came where I did hear of her, but cannot find her.

Shy. Why, there, there, there! a diamond gone, cost me two thousand ducats in Frankfort! The curse never fell upon our nation till now; I never felt it till now: two thousand ducats in that; 90 and other precious, precious jewels. I would my

daughter were dead at my foot, and the jewels in her ear! would she were hearsed at my foot, and the ducats in her coffin! No news of them? Why, so: and I know not what's spent in the search: why, thou loss upon loss! the thief gone with so much, and so much to find the thief; and no satisfaction, no revenge: nor no ill luck stirring but what lights on my shoulders; 100 no sighs but of my breathing; no tears but of my shedding.

Tub. Yes, other men have ill luck too: Antonio, as I heard in Genoa, —

Shy. What, what, what? ill luck, ill luck?

Tub. Hath an argosy cast away, coming from Tripolis.

Shy. I thank God, I thank God. Is't true, is't true?

Tub. I spoke with some of the sailors that escaped . . .
the wreck. 110

Shy. I thank thee, good Tubal: good news, good news! ha, ha! where? in Genoa?

Tub. Your daughter spent in Genoa, as I heard, in one night fourscore ducats.

Shy. Thou stickest a dagger in me: I shall never see my gold again: fourscore ducats at a sitting! fourscore ducats!

Tub. There came divers of Antonio's creditors in my company to Venice, that swear he cannot choose but break. 120

Shy. I am very glad of it: I'll plague him; I'll torture him: I am glad of it.

Tub. One of them showed me a ring that he had of your daughter for a monkey.

LINE 92. These wild words do not express Shylock's real feeling towards his daughter, but rather the hysteria of the moment. 124. Monkeys were favorite pets of the rich and fashionable,—not an unnatural purchase, but high-priced.

Shy. Out upon her! Thou torturtest me, Tubal: it was my turquoise; I had it of Leah when I was a bachelor: I would not have given it for a wilderness of monkeys.

Tub. But Antonio is certainly undone.

Shy. Nay, that's true, that's very true. Go,¹³⁰ Tubal, fee me an officer; bespeak him a fortnight before. I will have the heart of him, if he forfeit; for, were he out of Venice, I can make what merchandise I will. Go, go, Tubal, and meet me at our synagogue; go, good Tubal; at our synagogue, Tubal.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II — *Belmont. A room in Portia's house*

*Enter BASSANIO, PORTIA, GRATIANO, NERISSA,
and Attendants*

Por. I pray you, tarry: pause a day or two Before you hazard; for, in choosing wrong, I lose your company: therefore forbear awhile. There's something tells me, but it is not love, I would not lose you; and you know yourself, Hate counsels not in such a quality.

But lest you should not understand me well, — And yet a maiden hath no tongue but thought, — I would detain you here some month or two Before you venture for me. I could teach you How to choose right, but I am then forsworn; So will I never be: so may you miss me; But if you do, you'll make me wish a sin, That I had been forsworn. Beshrew your eyes,

10

LINE 131. *fee:* a retainer, evidently.

This is the famous Casket Scene in which three threads of the plot are gathered in Portia's hands. The fortnight is now past and the bond is forfeit, but Bassanio thinks of nothing but his love.

6. *quality:* manner.

They have o'erlook'd me and divided me;
One half of me is yours, the other half yours,
Mine own, I would say; but if mine, then yours,
And so all yours. O, these naughty times
Put bars between the owners and their rights!
And so, though yours, not yours. Prove it so,
Let fortune go to hell for it, not I.
I speak too long; but 'tis to peize the time,
To eke it and to draw it out in length,
To stay you from election.

20

Bass. Let me choose;
For as I am, I live upon the rack.

Por. Upon the rack, Bassanio! then confess
What treason there is mingled with your love.

Bass. None but that ugly treason of mistrust,
Which makes me fear the enjoying of my love:
There may as well be amity and life
'Tween snow and fire, as treason and my love.

30

Por. Ay, but I fear you speak upon the rack,
Where men enforced do speak anything.

Bass. Promise me life, and I'll confess the truth.

Por. Well then, confess and live.

Bass. “Confess” and “love”
Had been the very sum of my confession:
O happy torment, when my torturer
Doth teach me answers for deliverance!
But let me to my fortune and the caskets.

Por. Away, then! I am lock'd in one of them.
If you do love me, you will find me out.
Nerissa and the rest, stand all aloof.
Let music sound while he doth make his choice;

40

LINE 20. *Prove it so*: if it prove so. 22. *peize*: weight, from the Latin, *pensare*. 33. Shakespeare evidently held the modern view of the slight value of testimony extorted by torture.

Then, if he lose, he makes a swan-like end,
 Fading in music: that the comparison
 May stand more proper, my eye shall be the stream
 And watery death-bed for him. He may win;
 And what is music then? Then music is
 Even as the flourish when true subjects bow
 To a new-crowned monarch: such it is 50
 As are those dulcet sounds in break of day
 That creep into the dreaming bridegroom's ear
 And summon him to marriage. Now he goes,
 With no less presence, but with much more love,
 Than young Alcides, when he did redeem
 The virgin tribute paid by howling Troy
 To the sea-monster: I stand for sacrifice;
 The rest aloof are the Dardanian wives,
 With bleared visages, come forth to view
 The issue of the exploit. Go, Hercules! 60
 Live thou, I live: with much much more dismay
 I view the fight than thou that makest the fray.

Music, whilst BASSANIO comments on the caskets to himself

SONG

Tell me where is fancy bred,
 Or in the heart or in the head?
 How begot, how nourished?

Reply, reply.

It is engender'd in the eyes,
 With gazing fed; and fancy dies
 In the cradle where it lies.

Let us all ring fancy's knell:

I'll begin it, — Ding, dong, bell.

70

LINE 44. *swan-like end.* The swan's death song, a legend loved by poets. 55. *Alcides*, or Hercules, rescued the Trojan princess, Hesione, from a sea monster to gain the horses her father offered her deliverer. 58. *Dardanian*: Dardanean (Trojan).



White Studio

Portia: Away, then! I am lock'd in one of them:
If you do love me, you will find me out.



White Studio

Portia: Now he goes, . . .
Live thou, I live: with much much more dismay

All. Ding, dong, bell.

Bass. So may the outward shows be least themselves:

The world is still deceived with ornament.

In law, what plea so tainted and corrupt

But, being season'd with a gracious voice,

Obscures the show of evil? In religion,

What damned error, but some sober brow

Will bless it and approve it with a text,

Hiding the grossness with fair ornament?

80

There is no vice so simple but assumes

Some mark of virtue on his outward parts:

How many cowards, whose hearts are all as false

As stairs of sand, wear yet upon their chins

The beards of Hercules and frowning Mars,

Who, inward search'd, have livers white as milk;

And these assume but valour's excrement

To render them redoubted! Look on beauty,

And you shall see 'tis purchased by the weight;

Which therein works a miracle in nature,

90

Making them lightest that wear most of it:

So are those crisped snaky golden locks

Which make such wanton gambols with the wind,

Upon supposed fairness, often known

To be the dowry of a second head,

The skull that bred them in the sepulchre.

Thus ornament is but the guiled shore

LINE 73. *outward shows.* Perhaps the song was intended to suggest to Bassanio, that as fancy, or love, "engender'd in the eyes" has no happy end, he is not to judge by appearances. The inscriptions were artfully designed to pick out the true and brave lover, who will think, not of what he may get, but of what he can do for his lady. 82. *his:* its, a rare word in Shakespeare's day.

87. *excrement:* excrescence; that which grows out of the body. Refers here to Hercules' beard. 88. *beauty . . . purchased by the weight:* refers to paint and powder. 91. *lightest,* in the sense of "light o' love."

To a most dangerous sea; the beauteous scarf
Veiling an Indian beauty; in a word,
The seeming truth which cunning times put on 100
To entrap the wisest. Therefore, thou gaudy gold,
Hard food for Midas, I will none of thee;
Nor none of thee, thou pale and common drudge
'Tween man and man: but thou, thou meagre lead,
Which rather threatenest than dost promise aught,
Thy paleness moves me more than eloquence;
And here choose I: joy be the consequence!

Por. [Aside] How all the other passions fleet to
air,

As doubtful thoughts, and rash-embraced despair,
And shuddering fear, and green-eyed jealousy! 110
O love, be moderate; allay thy ecstasy;
In measure rain thy joy; scant this excess.
I feel too much thy blessing: make it less,
For fear I surfeit.

Bass. What find I here?

Opening the leaden casket.

Fair Portia's counterfeit! What demi-god
Hath come so near creation? Move these eyes?
Or whether, riding on the balls of mine,
Seem they in motion? Here are sever'd lips,
Parted with sugar breath: so sweet a bar 120
Should sunder such sweet friends. Here in her hairs

LINE 99. *Indian beauty*: what we should mean by a black Venus. 102. Midas prayed for the power to turn all he touched to gold, only to find that he could not eat gold or drink it. 106. *paleness*: probably a misprint for plainness. 116. Ellen Terry, "after Bassanio had made his fortunate choice, crumbled roses and allowed the leaves to flutter down into the leaden casket from which the happy lover had taken her portrait, and then, bending over, seemed to consecrate it with a kiss. Ecstasy has not, within my observation of acting, been better expressed." — Winter: *Shakespeare on the Stage*. 117. *Or whether*: Or I wonder whether . . . they only seem in motion.

The painter plays the spider and hath woven
 A golden mesh to entrap the hearts of men
 Faster than gnats in cobwebs: but her eyes, —
 How could he see to do them? having made one,
 Methinks it should have power to steal both his
 And leave itself unfurnish'd. Yet look, how far
 The substance of my praise doth wrong this shadow
 In underprizing it, so far this shadow
 Doth limp behind the substance. Here's the scroll, 130
 The continent and summary of my fortune.

[Reads] You that choose not by the view,
 Chance as fair and choose as true!
 Since this fortune falls to you,
 Be content and seek no new.
 If you be well pleased with this
 And hold your fortune for your bliss,
 Turn you where your lady is
 And claim her with a loving kiss.

A gentle scroll. Fair lady, by your leave; 140
 I come by note, to give and to receive.
 Like one of two contending in a prize,
 That thinks he hath done well in people's eyes,
 Hearing applause and universal shout,
 Giddy in spirit, still gazing in a doubt
 Whether those peals of praise be his or no;
 So, thrice-fair lady, stand I, even so;
 As doubtful whether what I see be true,
 Until confirm'd, sign'd, ratified by you.

Por. You see me, Lord Bassanio, where I stand, 150
 Such as I am: though for myself alone
 I would not be ambitious in my wish,
 To wish myself much better; yet, for you

LINE 127. *unfurnish'd*: unprovided with a mate. 131. *continent*: container. 141. *note*: refers to directions on the scroll. 142. *prize*: prize contest.

I would be trebled twenty times myself;
A thousand times more fair, ten thousand times
More rich;
That only to stand high in your account,
I might in virtues, beauties, livings, friends,
Exceed account; but the full sum of me
Is sum of something, which, to term in gross,
Is an unlesson'd girl, unschool'd, unpractised; 160
Happy in this, she is not yet so old
But she may learn; happier then in this,
She is not bred so dull but she can learn;
Happiest of all in that her gentle spirit
Commits itself to yours to be directed,
As from her lord, her governor, her king.
Myself and what is mine to you and yours
Is now converted: but now I was the lord
Of this fair mansion, master of my servants, 170
Queen o'er myself; and even now, but now,
This house, these servants and this same myself
Are yours, my lord: I give them with this ring;
Which when you part from, lose, or give away,
Let it presage the ruin of your love
And be my vantage to exclaim on you.

Bass. Madam, you have bereft me of all words,
Only my blood speaks to you in my veins;
And there is such confusion in my powers,
As, after some oration fairly spoke 180
By a beloved prince, there doth appear
Among the buzzing pleased multitude;
Where every something, being blent together,
Turns to a wild of nothing, save of joy,

LINE 158. *livings*: means, wealth. 176. *vantage*: warrant.
176. *exclaim on*: cry out against. 183. *something . . . nothing*:
each feeling, or expression, turns to a medley, chaos.

Express'd and not express'd. But when this ring
Parts from this finger, then parts life from hence:
O, then be bold to say Bassanio's dead!

Ner. My lord and lady, it is now our time,
That have stood by and seen our wishes prosper,
To cry, good joy: good joy, my lord and lady! 190

Gra. My lord Bassanio and my gentle lady,
I wish you all the joy that you can wish;
For I am sure you can wish none from me:
And when your honours mean to solemnize
The bargain of your faith, I do beseech you,
Even at that time I may be married too.

Bass. With all my heart, so thou canst get a wife.

Gra. I thank your lordship, you have got me one.
My eyes, my lord, can look as swift as yours:
You saw the mistress, I beheld the maid; 200
You loved, I loved; for intermission
No more pertains to me, my lord, than you.
Your fortune stood upon the casket there,
And so did mine too, as the matter falls;
For wooing here until I sweat again,
And swearing till my very roof was dry
With oaths of love, at last, if promise last,
I got a promise of this fair one here
To have her love, provided that your fortune
Achieved her mistress.

Por. Is this true, Nerissa? 210

Ner. Madam, it is, so you stand pleased withal.

Bass. And do you, Gratiano, mean good faith?

Gra. Yes, faith, my lord.

Bass. Our feast shall be much honour'd in your
marriage.

But who comes here? Lorenzo and his infidel?
What, and my old Venetian friend Salanio?

*Enter LORENZO, JESSICA, and SALANIO, a Messenger
from Venice*

Bass. Lorenzo and Salanio, welcome hither;
If that the youth of my new interest here
Have power to bid you welcome. By your leave,
I bid my very friends and countrymen,
Sweet Portia, welcome.

Por. So do I, my lord:
They are entirely welcome.

Lor. I thank your honour. For my part, my
lord,

My purpose was not to have seen you here;
But meeting with Salanio by the way,
He did intreat me, past all saying nay,
To come with him along.

Salan. I did, my lord;
And I have reason for it. Signor Antonio
Commends him to you. [Gives Bassanio a letter.]

Bass. Ere I ope his letter,
I pray you, tell me how my good friend doth.

Salan. Not sick, my lord, unless it be in mind;
Nor well, unless in mind: his letter there
Will show you his estate.

Gra. Nerissa, cheer yon stranger; bid her wel-
come.

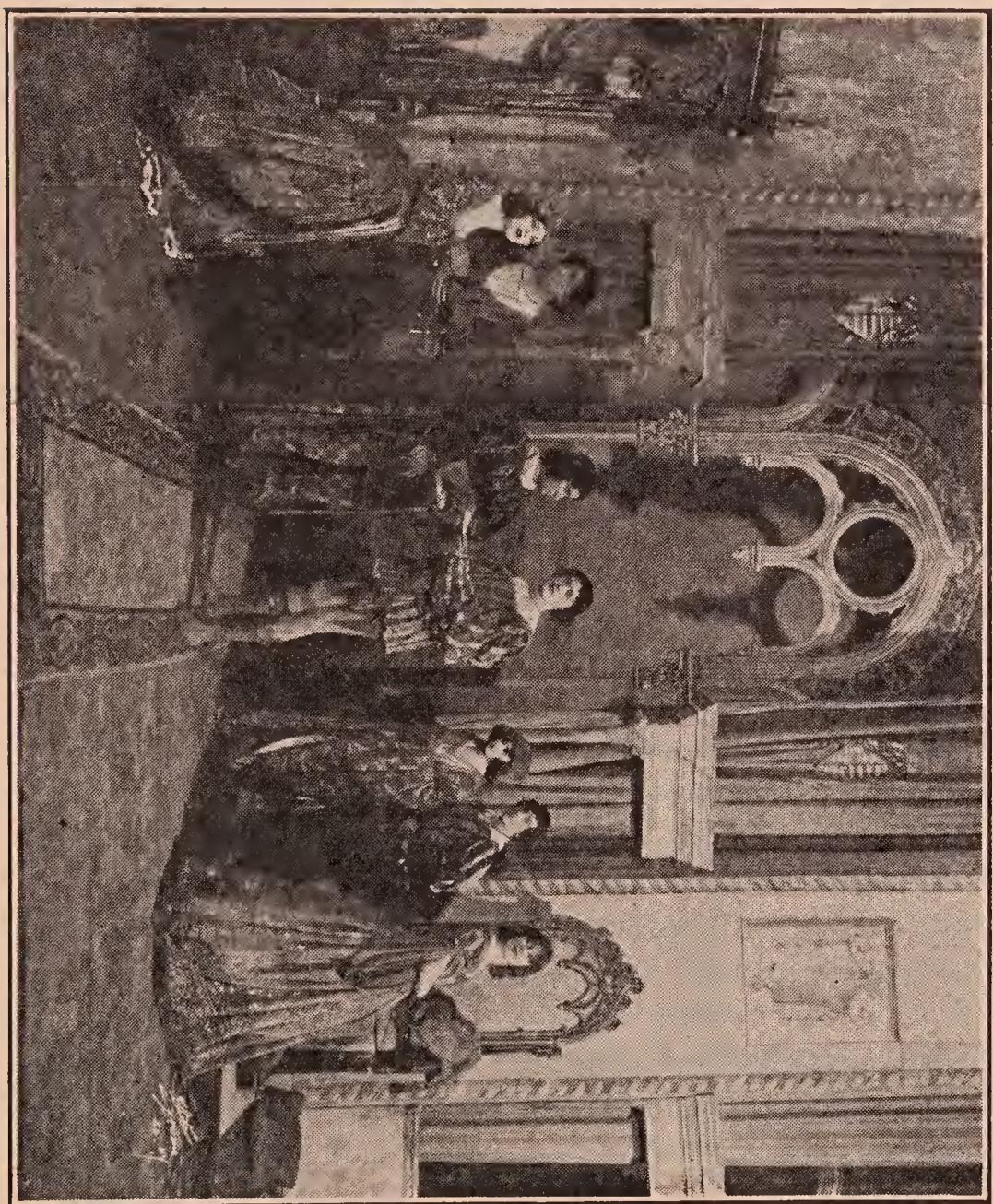
Your hand, Salanio: what's the news from Venice?
How doth that royal merchant, good Antonio?

240

LINE 222. *Salanio.* In both Quartos and Folios this is printed Salerio, but mistakes in both spelling and printing are common and it seems unlikely that a new character would be introduced without good reason at this point in the play.

Bassanio: Ere I ope
his letter, I pray you,
tell me how my good
friend doth.

Salanio: Not sick, my
lord, unless it be in
mind.



I know he will be glad of our success;
We are the Jasons, we have won the fleece.

Salan. I would you had won the fleece that he hath lost.

Por. There are some shrewd contents in yon same paper,

That steals the colour from Bassanio's cheek:
Some dear friend dead; else nothing in the world
Could turn so much the constitution
Of any constant man. What, worse and worse!
With leave, Bassanio; I am half yourself,
And I must freely have the half of anything
That this same paper brings you.

250

Bass. O sweet Portia,

Here are a few of the unpleasant'st words
That ever blotted paper! Gentle lady,
When I did first impart my love to you,
I freely told you, all the wealth I had
Ran in my veins, I was a gentleman;
And then I told you true: and yet, dear lady,
Rating myself at nothing, you shall see
How much I was a braggart. When I told you
My state was nothing, I should then have told you
That I was worse than nothing; for, indeed
I have engaged myself to a dear friend,
Engaged my friend to his mere enemy,
To feed my means. Here is a letter, lady;
The paper as the body of my friend,
And every word in it a gaping wound,
Issuing life-blood. But is it true, Salanio?
Have all his ventures fail'd? What, not one hit?
From Tripolis, from Mexico and England,
From Lisbon, Barbary and India?

5

270

LINE 244. *Jasons*. The Golden Fleece was won by Jason and his Argonauts. 246. *shrewd*: bad. 265. *mere*: unmixed.

And not one vessel 'scape the dreadful touch
Of merchant-marrying rocks?

Salan. Not one, my lord.

Besides, it should appear, that if he had
The present money to discharge the Jew,
He would not take it. Never did I know
A creature, that did bear the shape of man,
So keen and greedy to confound a man:
He plies the duke at morning and at night,
And doth impeach the freedom of the state,
If they deny him justice: twenty merchants,
The duke himself, and the magnificoes
Of greatest port, have all persuaded with him;
But none can drive him from the envious plea
Of forfeiture, of justice and his bond.

280

Jes. When I was with him I have heard him
swear

To Tubal and to Chus, his countrymen,
That he would rather have Antonio's flesh
Than twenty times the value of the sum
That he did owe him: and I know, my lord,
If law, authority and power deny not,
It will go hard with poor Antonio.

290

Por. Is it your dear friend that is thus in trouble?

Bass. The dearest friend to me, the kindest man,
The best-condition'd and unwearied spirit
In doing courtesies, and one in whom
The ancient Roman honour more appears
Than any that draws breath in Italy.

300

Por. What sum owes he the Jew?

Bass. For me three thousand ducats.

Por. What, no more?
Pay him six thousand, and deface the bond;

LINE 296. *unwearied*: most unwearied, the superlative being carried over from *best*.

Double six thousand, and then treble that,
 Before a friend of this description
 Shall lose a hair through Bassanio's fault.
 First go with me to church and call me wife,
 And then away to Venice to your friend;
 For never shall you lie by Portia's side
 With an unquiet soul. You shall have gold
 To pay the petty debt twenty times over:
 When it is paid, bring your true friend along.
 My maid Nerissa and myself meantime
 Will live as maids and widows. Come, away!
 For you shall hence upon your wedding-day:
 Bid your friends welcome, show a merry cheer:
 Since you are dear bought, I will love you dear.
 But let me hear the letter of your friend.

310

Bass. [Reads] Sweet Bassanio, my ships have all miscarried, my creditors grow cruel, my estate is very low, my bond to the Jew is forfeit; and since in paying it, it is impossible I should live, all debts are cleared between you and I. If I might but see you at my death — notwithstanding, use your pleasure: if your love do not persuade you to come, let not my letter.

Por. O love, dispatch all business, and be gone!

Bass. Since I have your good leave to go away,
 I will make haste: but, till I come again,
 No bed shall e'er be guilty of my stay,
 No rest be interposed 'twixt us twain.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III — *Venice. A street*

Enter SHYLOCK, SALARINO, ANTONIO, and Gaoler

Shy. Gaoler, look to him: tell not me of mercy:
 This is the fool that lent out money gratis:
 Gaoler, look to him.

LINE 305. ha-ir. 322. *between you and I.* You and I, regarded as a stock phrase, was not inflected.

Ant. Hear me yet, good Shylock.

Shy. I'll have my bond; speak not against my bond:

I have sworn an oath that I will have my bond.
Thou call'dst me dog before thou hadst a cause;
But, since I am a dog, beware my fangs:
The duke shall grant me justice. I do wonder,
Thou naughty gaoler, that thou art so fond
To come abroad with him at his request. 10

Ant. I pray thee, hear me speak.

Shy. I'll have my bond; I will not hear thee speak:

I'll have my bond; and therefore speak no more.
I'll not be made a soft and dull-eyed fool,
To shake the head, relent, and sigh, and yield
To Christian intercessors. Follow not;
I'll have no speaking: I will have my bond.

[*Exit.*]

Salar. It is the most impenetrable cur
That ever kept with men.

Ant. Let him alone:

I'll follow him no more with bootless prayers. 20
He seeks my life; his reason well I know:
I oft deliver'd from his forfeitures
Many that have at times made moan to me;
Therefore he hates me.

Salar. I am sure the duke
Will never grant this forfeiture to hold.

Ant. The duke cannot deny the course of law,
For the commodity that strangers have
With us in Venice. If it be denied,
'Twill much impeach the justice of his state:
Since that the trade and profit of the city 30

Consisteth of all nations. Therefore, go:
 These griefs and losses have so bated me,
 That I shall hardly spare a pound of flesh
 To-morrow to my bloody creditor.

Well, gaoler, on. Pray God, Bassanio come
 To see me pay his debt, and then I care not!

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV — *Berlino. A room in Portia's house*

*Enter PORTIA, NERISSA, LORENZO, JESSICA, and
 BALTHASAR*

Lor. Madam, although I speak it in your presence,

You have a noble and a true conceit
 Of god-like amity; which appears most strongly
 In bearing thus the absence of your lord.
 But if you knew to whom you show this honour,
 How true a gentleman you send relief,
 How dear a lover of my lord your husband,
 I know you would be prouder of the work
 Than customary bounty can enforce you.

Por. I never did repent for doing good,
 Nor shall not now: for in companions
 That do converse and waste the time together,
 Whose souls do bear an equal yoke of love,
 There must be needs a like proportion
 Of lineaments, of manners and of spirit;
 Which makes me think that this Antonio,
 Being the bosom lover of my lord,
 Must needs be like my lord. If it be so,
 How little is the cost I have bestow'd

10

LINE 32. *bated*: reduced.

Sufficient time has elapsed since Scene 2 for Portia to have made her plans and written her letter to Dr. Bellario.

2. *conceit*: conception.

In purchasing the semblance of my soul
 From out the state of hellish misery!
 This comes too near the praising of myself;
 Therefore no more of it: hear other things.
 Lorenzo, I commit into your hands
 The husbandry and manage of my house
 Until my lord's return: for mine own part,
 I have toward heaven breathed a secret vow
 To live in prayer and contemplation,
 Only attended by Nerissa here,
 Until her husband and my lord's return:
 There is a monastery two miles off;
 And there will we abide. I do desire you
 Not to deny this imposition;
 The which my love and some necessity
 Now lays upon you.

Lor. Madam, with all my heart;
 I shall obey you in all fair commands.

Por. My people do already know my mind,
 And will acknowledge you and Jessica
 In place of Lord Bassanio and myself.
 And so farewell, till we shall meet again.

40

Lor. Fair thoughts and happy hours attend on
 you!

Jes. I wish your ladyship all heart's content.

Por. I thank you for your wish, and am well
 pleased

To wish it back on you: fare you well, Jessica.

[*Exeunt Jessica and Lorenzo.*

Now, Balthasar,
 As I have ever found thee honest-true,
 So let me find thee still. Take this same letter,

LINE 25. *husbandry*: care. 25. *manage*: management.
 31. There was a Benedictine convent at Saonara, three miles
 from the Brenta. 33. *imposition*: task imposed.

And use thou all the endeavour of a man
 In speed to Padua: see thou render this
 Into my cousin's hand, Doctor Bellario:
 And, look, what notes and garments he doth give
 thee,
 Bring them, I pray thee, with imagined speed
 Unto the traject, to the common ferry
 Which trades to Venice. Waste no time in words,
 But get thee gone; I shall be there before thee.

Balth. Madam, I go with all convenient speed.

[*Exit.*]

Por. Come on, Nerissa; I have work in hand
 That you yet know not of: we'll see our husbands
 Before they think of us.

Ner. Shall they see us?

Por. They shall, Nerissa; but in such a habit,
 That they shall think we are accomplished
 With that we lack. I'll hold thee any wager,
 When we are both accoutred like young men,
 I'll prove the prettier fellow of the two,
 And wear my dagger with the braver grace,
 And speak between the change of man and boy
 With a reed voice, and turn two mincing steps
 Into a manly stride, and speak of frays
 Like a fine bragging youth, and tell quaint lies,
 How honourable ladies sought my love,
 Which I denying, they fell sick and died;
 I could not do withal; then I'll repent,
 And wish, for all that, that I had not kill'd them;
 And twenty of these puny lies I'll tell,
 That men shall swear I have discontinued school

60

70

LINE 52. *imagined*: imaginable. 53. *traject*: ferry (Italian *traghetto*). Sometimes spelled "tranect." 61. *accomplished*: furnished. 69. *quaint*: ingenious. 72. *could not do withal*: could not help it.

About a twelvemonth. I have within my mind
A thousand raw tricks of these bragging Jacks,
Which I will practise.

But come, I'll tell thee all my whole device
When I am in my coach, which stays for us
At the park gate; and therefore haste away,
For we must measure twenty miles to-day.

81

[*Exeunt.*SCENE V — *The same. A garden**Enter LAUNCELOT and JESSICA*

Laun. Yes, truly; for, look you, the sins of the father are to be laid upon the children: therefore, I promise ye, I fear you. I was always plain with you, and so now I speak my agitation of the matter: therefore be of good cheer, for truly I think you are damned.

Jes. I shall be saved by my husband; he hath 21 made me a Christian.

Laun. Truly, the more to blame he: we were Christians enow before; e'en as many as could well live, one by another. This making of Christians will raise the price of hogs: if we grow all to be pork-eaters, we shall not shortly have a rasher on the coals for money.

Enter LORENZO

Jes. I'll tell my husband, Launcelot, what you say: here he comes.

30

Lor. I shall grow jealous of you shortly, Launcelot, if you thus get my wife into corners.

LINE 77. *Jacks:* fellows. 84. *twenty miles.* Dolo, on the Brenta, is twenty miles from Venice.

Launcelot and Jessica come on as Portia and Nerissa go off.

3. *fear you;* fear for you. 4. *agitation:* cogitation.

Jes. Nay, you need not fear us, Lorenzo: Launcelot and I are out. He tells me flatly, there is no mercy for me in heaven, because I am a Jew's daughter: and he says, you are no good member of the commonwealth, for in converting Jews to Christians, you raise the price of pork.

39

Lor. How every fool can play upon the word! I think the best grace of wit will shortly turn into silence, and discourse grow commendable in none only but parrots. Go in, sirrah; bid them prepare for dinner.

Laun. That is done, sir; they have all stomachs.

Lor. Goodly Lord, what a wit-snapper are you! then bid them prepare dinner.

Laun. That is done too, sir; only “cover” is the word.

Lor. Will you cover then, sir?

Laun. Not so, sir, neither; I know my duty.

Lor. Yet more quarrelling with occasion! Wilt thou show the whole wealth of thy wit in an instant? I pray thee, understand a plain man in his plain meaning: go to thy fellows; bid them cover the table, serve in the meat, and we will come in to dinner.

Laun. For the table, sir, it shall be served in; for the meat, sir, it shall be covered; for your coming in to dinner, sir, why, let it be as humours and conceits shall govern.

[Exit.]

Lor. O dear discretion, how his words are suited! The fool hath planted in his memory An army of good words; and I do know A many fools, that stand in better place, Garnish'd like him, that for a tricksy word

LINES 58–59. *cover.* Lorenzo uses the word in the sense of setting the table; Launcelot, perversely, assumes he means “Put on your hat.” 60. *quarrelling with occasion:* quibbling. 70. *suited;* dressed up.

Defy the matter. How cheer'st thou, Jessica?
 And now, good sweet, say thy opinion,
 How dost thou like the Lord Bassanio's wife?

Jes. Past all expressing. It is very meet
 The Lord Bassanio live an upright life;
 For, having such a blessing in his lady, 80
 He finds the joys of heaven here on earth;
 And if on earth he do not merit it,
 In reason he should never come to heaven.
 Why, if two gods should play some heavenly match
 And on the wager lay two earthly women,
 And Portia one, there must be something else
 Pawn'd with the other, for the poor rude world
 Hath not her fellow.

Lor. Even such a husband
 Hast thou of me as she is for a wife.

Jes. Nay, but ask my opinion too of that. 90

Lor. I will anon: first, let us go to dinner.

Jes. Nay, let me praise you while I have a stomach-
 ach.

Lor. No, pray thee, let it serve for table-talk;
 Then, howsoe'er thou speak'st, 'mong other things
 I shall digest it.

Jes. Well, I'll set you forth.

[*Exeunt.*

LINE 82. *merit*: often printed "mean," a misprint. 87. *Pawn'd*: staked. 92. *stomach*: appetite.

ACT IV

SCENE I — *Venice. A court of justice*

*Enter the DUKE, the Magnificoes, ANTONIO, BASSANIO,
GRATIANO, SALANIO, and others*

Duke. What, is Antonio here?

Ant. Ready, so please your grace.

Duke. I am sorry for thee: thou art come to answer

A stony adversary, an inhuman wretch
Uncapable of pity, void and empty
From any dram of mercy.

Ant. I have heard
Your grace hath ta'en great pains to qualify
His rigorous course; but since he stands obdurate
And that no lawful means can carry me
Out of his envy's reach, I do oppose
My patience to his fury, and am arm'd
To suffer, with a quietness of spirit,
The very tyranny and rage of his.

Duke. Go one, and call the Jew into the court.

Salan. He is ready at the door: he comes, my lord.

Enter SHYLOCK

Duke. Make room, and let him stand before our face.

Shylock, the world thinks, and I think so too,

“The Trial Scene, with its tugging vicissitudes of passion and its hush of terrible expectation, — now ringing with the Jew's sharp, spiteful snaps of malice, now made musical with Portia's strains of eloquence, now holy with Antonio's tender breathings of friendship, and dashed, from time to time, with Gratiano's fierce jets of wrath and fiercer jets of mirth, — is hardly surpassed in tragic power anywhere; and as it forms the catastrophe proper, so it concentrates the interest of the whole play.”
— Hudson.

LINES 5-6. *empty from:* empty of. 10. *envy:* malice.

That thou but lead'st this fashion of thy malice
 To the last hour of act: and then 'tis thought
 Thou'l show thy mercy and remorse more strange 20
 Than is thy strange apparent cruelty;
 And where thou now exact'st the penalty,
 Which is a pound of this poor merchant's flesh,
 Thou wilt not only loose the forfeiture,
 But, touch'd with human gentleness and love,
 Forgive a moiety of the principal;
 Glancing an eye of pity on his losses,
 That have of late so huddled on his back,
 Enew to press a royal merchant down
 And pluck commiseration of his state 30
 From brassy bosoms and rough hearts of flint,
 From stubborn Turks and Tartars, never train'd
 To offices of tender courtesy.
 We all expect a gentle answer, Jew.

Shy. I have possess'd your grace of what I pur-
 pose;
 And by our holy Sabbath have I sworn
 To have the due and forfeit of my bond:
 If you deny it, let the danger light
 Upon your charter and your city's freedom.
 You'll ask me, why I rather choose to have 40
 A weight of carrion flesh than to receive
 Three thousand ducats: I'll not answer that:
 But, say, it is my humour: is it answer'd?
 What if my house be troubled with a rat
 And I be pleased to give ten thousand ducats
 To have it baned? What, are you answer'd yet?
 Some men there are love not a gaping pig;
 Some, that are mad if they behold a cat;

LINE 39. *charter.* Shakespeare is thinking of an English city. Venice, a sovereign state, needed no charter. 47. *gaping pig:* a roasted pig came to table with a lemon in its mouth.

And others, at the bagpipe; for affection, 50
 Mistress of passion, sways it to the mood
 Of what it likes or loathes. Now, for your answer:
 As there is no firm reason to be render'd,
 Why he cannot abide a gaping pig;
 Why he, a harmless necessary cat;
 Why he, a woollen bagpipe;
 So can I give no reason, nor I will not,
 More than a lodged hate and a certain loathing 60
 I bear Antonio, that I follow thus
 A losing suit against him. Are you answer'd?

Bass. This is no answer, thou unfeeling man,
 To excuse the current of thy cruelty.

Shy. I am not bound to please thee with my
 answers.

Bass. Do all men kill the things they do not
 love?

Shy. Hates any man the thing he would not kill?

Bass. Every offence is not a hate at first.

Shy. What, wouldst thou have a serpent sting
 thee twice?

Ant. I pray you, think you question with the
 Jew: 70

You may as well go stand upon the beach
 And bid the main flood bate his usual height;
 You may as well use question with the wolf
 Why he hath made the ewe bleat for the lamb;
 You may as well forbid the mountain pines
 To wag their high tops and to make no noise,
 When they are fretten with the gusts of heaven;
 You may as well do any thing most hard,
 As seek to soften that — than which what's harder? —
 His Jewish heart: therefore, I do beseech you, 80

LINE 50. *affection:* fancy. 56. *woollen:* refers to the cover.
 72. *main:* ocean. 77. *fretten:* fretted.

Make no more offers, use no farther means,
But with all brief and plain conveniency
Let me have judgement and the Jew his will.

Bass. For thy three thousand ducats here is six.

Shy. If every ducat in six thousand ducats
Were in six parts and every part a ducat,
I would not draw them; I would have my bond.

Duke. How shalt thou hope for mercy, rendering
none?

Shy. What judgement shall I dread, doing no
wrong?

You have among you many a purchased slave,
Which, like your asses and your dogs and mules,
You use in abject and in slavish parts,
Because you bought them: shall I say to you,
Let them be free, marry them to your heirs?
Why sweat they under burthens? let their beds
Be made as soft as yours and let their palates
Be season'd with such viands? You will answer
“The slaves are ours:” so do I answer you:
The pound of flesh, which I demand of him,
Is dearly bought; 'tis mine and I will have it.
If you deny me, fie upon your law!

90

100

There is no force in the decrees of Venice.
I stand for judgement: answer; shall I have it?

Duke. Upon my power I may dismiss this court,
Unless Bellario, a learned doctor,
Whom I have sent for to determine this,
Come here to-day.

Salan. My lord, here stays without

LINE 89. *no wrong:* no injustice according to the letter of the law. 90. Shylock's argument is that they purchase human flesh and use it as they like. Why may he not do the same? 107. *without:* outside.

A messenger with letters from the doctor,
New come from Padua.

Duke. Bring us the letters; call the messenger. 110

Bass. Good cheer, Antonio! What, man, courage yet!

The Jew shall have my flesh, blood, bones and all,
Ere thou shalt lose for me one drop of blood.

Ant. I am a tainted wether of the flock,
Meetest for death: the weakest kind of fruit
Drops earliest to the ground; and so let me:
You cannot better be employ'd, Bassanio,
Than to live still and write mine epitaph.

Enter NERISSA, dressed like a lawyer's clerk

Duke. Came you from Padua, from Bellario?

Ner. From both, my lord. Bellario greets your grace. [Presenting a letter. 120]

Bass. Why dost thou whet thy knife so earnestly?

Shy. To cut the forfeiture from that bankrupt there.

Gra. Not on thy sole, but on thy soul, harsh Jew,
Thou makest thy knife keen: but no metal can,
No, not the hangman's axe, bear half the keenness
Of thy sharp envy. Can no prayers pierce thee?

Shy. No, none that thou hast wit enough to make.

Gra. O, be thou damn'd, inexorable dog!

And for thy life let justice be accused.

Thou almost makest me waver in my faith

130

To hold opinion with Pythagoras,

That souls of animals infuse themselves

LINES 118-124. "Shylock smiles scornfully, and slowly drawing his knife, at line 124, kneels to whet it on the sole of the shoe." — Booth. 121-142. The Duke is reading the letter. 125. *hangman*: executioner. 129. *for thy life*: for letting thee live. 131. *To hold*: so as to hold. Pythagoras was the Greek philosopher who taught transmigration of souls.

Into the trunks of men: thy currish spirit
 Govern'd a wolf, who, hang'd for human slaughter,
 Even from the gallows did his fell soul fleet,
 And, whilst thou lay'st in thy unhallow'd dam,
 Infused itself in thee; for thy desires
 Are wolvish, bloody, starved and ravenous.

Shy. Till thou canst rail the seal from off my bond,
 Thou but offend'st thy lungs to speak so loud:
 Repair thy wit, good youth, or it will fall
 To cureless ruin. I stand here for law. 140

Duke. This letter from Bellario doth commend
 A young and learned doctor to our court.
 Where is he?

Ner. He attendeth here hard by,
 To know your answer, whether you'll admit him.

Duke. With all my heart. Some three or four
 of you

Go give him courteous conduct to this place.
 Meantime the court shall hear Bellario's letter.

Clerk. [Reads] Your grace shall understand that 150
 at the receipt of your letter I am very sick: but in
 the instant that your messenger came, in loving visita-
 tion was with me a young doctor of Rome; his name
 is Balthasar. I acquainted him with the cause in con-
 troversy between the Jew and Antonio the merchant:
 we turned o'er many books together: he is furnished
 with my opinion; which, bettered with his own
 learning, the greatness whereof I cannot enough
 commend, comes with him, at my importunity, to
 fill up your grace's request in my stead. I beseech 160
 you, let his lack of years be no impediment to let him

LINE 134. *who:* a supplementary pronoun often used when the relative is separated from its antecedent. 161. *no impediment to let him lack:* no hindrance to his receiving.

lack a reverend estimation; for I never knew so young a body with so old a head. I leave him to your gracious acceptance, whose trial shall better publish his commendation.

Duke. You hear the learn'd Bellario, what he writes:

And here, I take it, is the doctor come.

Enter PORTIA, dressed like a doctor of laws

Give me your hand. Come you from old Bellario?

Por. I did, my lord.

Duke. You are welcome: take your place. 170
Are you acquainted with the difference
That holds this present question in the court?

Por. I am informed throughly of the cause.
Which is the merchant here, and which the Jew?

Duke. Antonio and old Shylock, both stand forth.

Por. Is your name Shylock?

Shy. Shylock is my name.

Por. Of a strange nature is the suit you follow;
Yet in such rule that the Venetian law
Cannot impugn you as you do proceed.
You stand within his danger, do you not? 180

Ant. Ay, so he says.

Por. Do you confess the bond?

Ant. I do.

Por. Then must the Jew be merciful.

Shy. On what compulsion must I? tell me that.

Por. The quality of mercy is not strain'd,
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven

LINE 164. *whose*: for his. 170. "Portia goes to a table on dais, facing the Duke." — Booth. 178. *in such rule*: so regular. 180. *within his danger*: in danger from him. 184. *strain'd*: constrained.

Upon the place beneath: it is twice blest;
 It blesseth him that gives and him that takes:
 'Tis mightiest in the mightiest: it becomes
 The throned monarch better than his crown;
 His sceptre shows the force of temporal power,
 The attribute to awe and majesty,
 Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings;
 But mercy is above this sceptred sway;
 It is enthroned in the hearts of kings,
 It is an attribute to God himself;
 And earthly power doth then show likest God's
 When mercy seasons justice. Therefore, Jew,
 Though justice be thy plea, consider this,
 That, in the course of justice, none of us
 Should see salvation: we do pray for mercy;
 And that same prayer doth teach us all to render
 The deeds of mercy. I have spoke thus much
 To mitigate the justice of thy plea;
 Which if thou follow, this strict court of Venice
 Must needs give sentence 'gainst the merchant there.

200

Shy. My deeds upon my head! I crave the law,
 The penalty and forfeit of my bond.

Por. Is he not able to discharge the money?

Bass. Yes, here I tender it for him in the court;
 Yea, twice the sum: if that will not suffice,
 I will be bound to pay it ten times o'er,
 On forfeit of my hands, my head, my heart:
 If this will not suffice, it must appear
 That malice bears down truth. And I beseech you,
 Wrest once the law to your authority:
 To do a great right, do a little wrong,
 And curb this cruel devil of his will.

210

Por. It must not be; there is no power in Venice

Can alter a decree established:
 'Twill be recorded for a precedent,
 And many an error by the same example
 Will rush into the state: it cannot be.

Shy. A Daniel come to judgement! yea, a Daniel!
 O wise young judge, how I do honour thee!

Por. I pray you, let me look upon the bond.

Shy. Here 'tis, most reverend doctor, here it is.

Por. Shylock, there's thrice thy money offer'd thee.

Shy. An oath, an oath, I have an oath in heaven:
 Shall I lay perjury upon my soul?
 No, not for Venice.

Por. Why, this bond is forfeit;
 And lawfully by this the Jew may claim
 A pound of flesh, to be by him cut off
 Nearest the merchant's heart. Be merciful:
 Take thrice thy money; bid me tear the bond.

Shy. When it is paid according to the tenour.
 It doth appear you are a worthy judge;
 You know the law, your exposition
 Hath been most sound: I charge you by the law,
 Whereof you are a well-deserving pillar,
 Proceed to judgement: by my soul I swear
 There is no power in the tongue of man
 To alter me: I stay here on my bond.

Ant. Most heartily I do beseech the court
 To give the judgement.

Por. Why then, thus it is:
 You must prepare your bosom for his knife.

Shy. O noble judge! O excellent young man!

Por. For the intent and purpose of the law

LINE 223. In the *Apocrypha* (Story of Susannah and the Elders), Daniel, a youth, convicted the Elders of false witness and saved the woman. Shylock speaks "almost wildly and kisses the hem of Portia's gown." — Booth.

Hath full relation to the penalty,
Which here appeareth due upon the bond.

Shy. 'Tis very true: O wise and upright judge! 250
How much more elder art thou than thy looks!

Por. Therefore lay bare your bosom.

Shy. Ay, his breast:
So says the bond: doth it not, noble judge?
"Nearest his heart:" those are the very words.

Por. It is so. Are there balance here to weigh
The flesh?

Shy. I have them ready.

Por. Have by some surgeon, Shylock, on your
charge,

To stop his wounds, lest he do bleed to death.

Shy. Is it so nominated in the bond?

Por. It is not so express'd: but what of that? 260
'Twere good you do so much for charity.

Shy. I cannot find it; 'tis not in the bond.

Por. You, merchant, have you any thing to say?

Ant. But little: I am arm'd and well prepared.
Give me your hand, Bassanio: fare you well!
Grieve not that I am fallen to this for you;
For herein Fortune shows herself more kind
Than is her custom: it is still her use
To let the wretched man outlive his wealth,
To view with hollow eye and wrinkled brow 270
An age of poverty; from which lingering penance
Of such misery doth she cut me off.

Commend me to your honourable wife:
Tell her the process of Antonio's end;
Say how I loved you, speak me fair in death;

LINE 255. *balance*: balances. Plural *s* is often omitted when a word ends with a sibilant. "Shylock places the scales upon the dais (or table) and takes the bond from Portia." — Booth, 264. *arm'd* (with patience).

And, when the tale is told, bid her be judge
Whether Bassanio had not once a love.

Repent but you that you shall lose your friend,
And he repents not that he pays your debt;
For if the Jew do cut but deep enough, 280
I'll pay it presently with all my heart.

Bass. Antonio, I am married to a wife
Which is as dear to me as life itself;
But life itself, my wife, and all the world,
Are not with me esteem'd above thy life:
I would lose all, ay, sacrifice them all
Here to this devil, to deliver you.

Por. Your wife would give you little thanks for
that,

If she were by, to hear you make the offer.

Gra. I have a wife, whom, I protest, I love: 290
I would she were in heaven, so she could
Entreat some power to change this currish Jew.

Ner. 'Tis well you offer it behind her back;
The wish would make else an unquiet house.

Shy. These be the Christian husbands. I have a
daughter;
Would any of the stock of Barrabas
Had been her husband rather than a Christian!

[*Aside.*

We trifle time: I pray thee, pursue sentence.

Por. A pound of that same merchant's flesh is
thine:

The court awards it, and the law doth give it. 300

Shy. Most rightful judge!

LINE 281. *heart.* To jest at such a time shows courage. The bit of comic relief at a tense moment is characteristic of Shakespeare. 296. Barrabas. 298. pursue. 301. "With back to audience and knife raised high above his head." — Booth.

Por. And you must cut this flesh from off his breast:

The law allows it, and the court awards it.

Shy. Most learned judge! A sentence! Come, prepare!

Por. Tarry a little; there is something else. This bond doth give thee here no jot of blood; The words expressly are “a pound of flesh:” Take then thy bond, take thou thy pound of flesh; But, in the cutting it, if thou dost shed One drop of Christian blood, thy lands and goods 310 Are, by the laws of Venice, confiscate Unto the state of Venice.

Gra. O upright judge! Mark, Jew: O learned judge!

Shy. Is that the law?

Por. Thyself shalt see the act: For, as thou urgest justice, be assured Thou shalt have justice, more than thou desirest.

Gra. O learned judge! Mark, Jew: a learned judge!

Shy. I take this offer, then; pay the bond thrice And let the Christian go.

Bass. Here is the money.

Por. Soft!

The Jew shall have all justice; soft! no haste: He shall have nothing but the penalty.

Gra. O Jew! an upright judge, a learned judge!

Por. Therefore prepare thee to cut off the flesh. Shed thou no blood, nor cut thou less nor more But just a pound of flesh: if thou cut’st more Or less than a just pound, be it but so much

320

LINE 304. Here Irving (as Shylock) springs at Antonio and Bassanio flings himself between them. 314. “Shylock staggers backward and drops the knife.” — Booth.

As makes it light or heavy in the substance
Of the division of the twentieth part
Of one poor scruple, nay, if the scale do turn 330
But in the estimation of a hair,
Thou diest and all thy goods are confiscate.

Gra. A second Daniel, a Daniel, Jew!
Now, infidel, I have you on the hip.

Por. Why doth the Jew pause? take thy forfeiture.

Shy. Give me my principal, and let me go.

Bass. I have it ready for thee; here it is.

Por. He hath refused it in the open court:
He shall have merely justice and his bond.

Gra. A Daniel, still say I, a second Daniel! I thank thee, Jew, for teaching me that word.

Shy. Shall I not have barely my principal?

Por. Thou shalt have nothing but the forfeiture,
To be so taken at thy peril, Jew.

Shy. Why, then the devil give him good of it!
I'll stay no longer question.

Por. Tarry, Jew:

The law hath yet another hold on you.

It is enacted in the laws of Venice,

If it be proved against an alien

That by direct or indirect attempts

He seek the life of any citizen,
The party 'gainst the which he doth contrive
Shall seize one half his goods; the other half
Comes to the privy coffer of the state;
And the offender's life lies in the mercy
Of the duke only, 'gainst all other voice.
In which predicament, I say, thou stand'st;

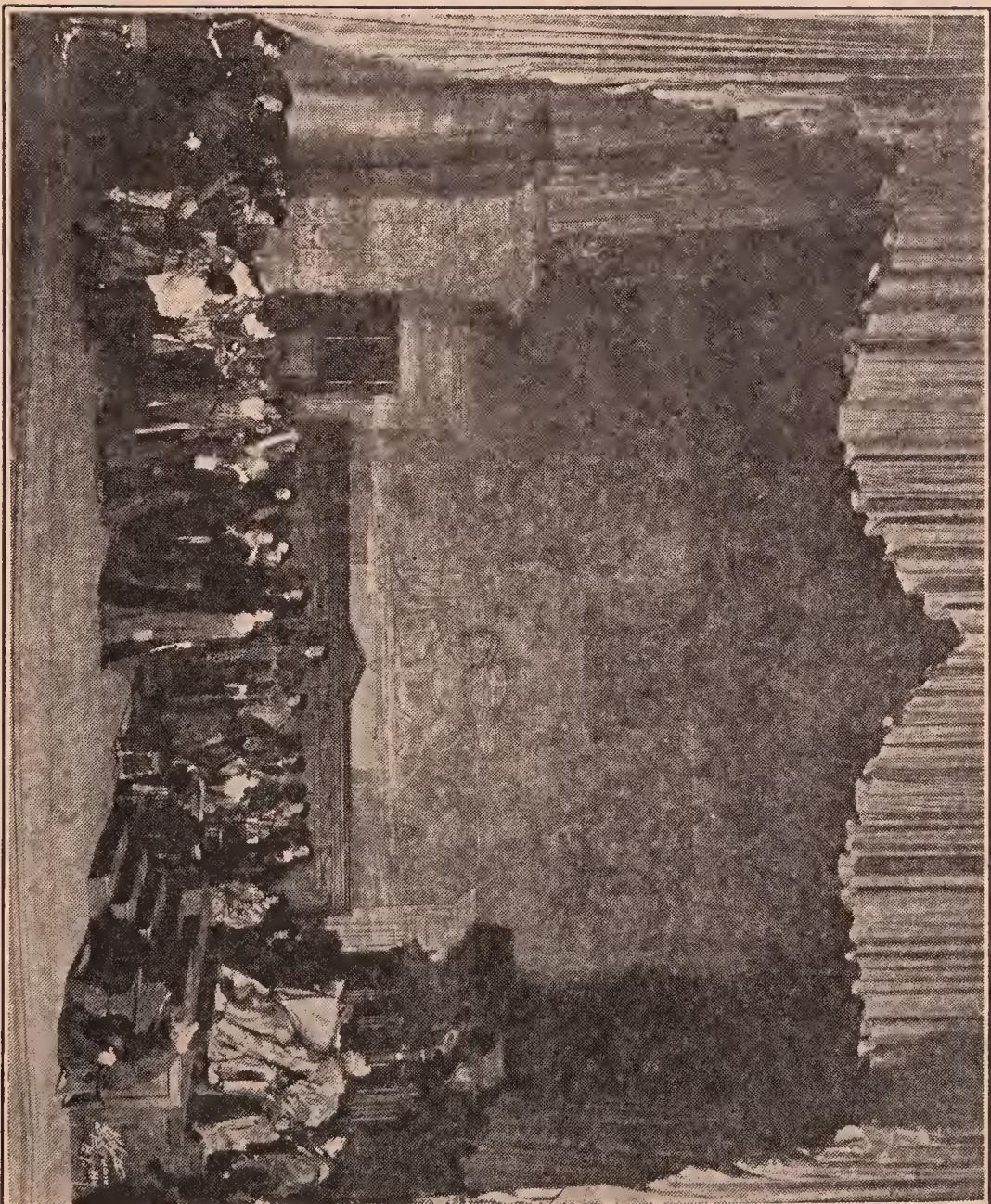
LINE 335. *pause.* Possibly for an instant Shylock was tempted to take his revenge at the cost of his life. 348. This was probably the advice of Dr. Bellario.

Shylock: Most learned
judge! A sentence!
Come, prepare!

Porcia: Tarry a little;

there is something
else.

This bond doth give
thee here no jot of
blood.—



For it appears, by manifest proceeding,
 That indirectly and directly too
 Thou hast contrived against the very life
 Of the defendant; and thou hast incur'd
 The danger formerly by me rehearsed.
 Down therefore and beg mercy of the duke.

360

Gra. Beg that thou mayst have leave to hang
 thyself:

And yet, thy wealth being forfeit to the state,
 Thou hast not left the value of a cord;
 Therefore thou must be hang'd at the state's charge.

Duke. That thou shalt see the difference of our
 spirits,

I pardon thee thy life before thou ask it:
 For half thy wealth, it is Antonio's;
 The other half comes to the general state,
 Which humbleness may drive unto a fine.

370

Por. Ay, for the state, not for Antonio.

Shy. Nay, take my life and all; pardon not that:
 You take my house when you do take the prop
 That doth sustain my house; you take my life
 When you do take the means whereby I live.

Por. What mercy can you render him, Antonio?

Gra. A halter gratis; nothing else, for God's
 sake.

Ant. So please my lord the duke and all the
 court

380

To quit the fine for one half of his goods,
 I am content — so he will let me have
 The other half in use — to render it,
 Upon his death, unto the gentleman
 That lately stole his daughter:
 Two things provided more, that, for this favour,
 He presently become a Christian;

LINE 373. Portia means that the Duke cannot remit Antonio's half. 381. *quit*: remit. 387. *presently*: at once.

The other, that he do record a gift,
Here in the court, of all he dies possess'd of
Unto his son Lorenzo and his daughter.

390

Duke. He shall do this, or else I do recant
The pardon that I late pronounced here.

Por. Art thou contented, Jew? what dost thou
say?

Shy. I am content.

Por. Clerk, draw a deed of gift.

Shy. I pray you, give me leave to go from hence;
I am not well: send the deed after me,
And I will sign it.

Duke. Get thee gone, but do it.

Gra. In christening shalt thou have two god-
fathers:

Had I been judge, thou shouldst have had ten more,
To bring thee to the gallows, not the font.

400

[*Exit Shylock.*

Duke. Sir, I entreat you home with me to dinner.

Por. I humbly do desire your grace of pardon:
I must away this night toward Padua,
And it is meet I presently set forth.

Duke. I am sorry that your leisure serves you not.
Antonio, gratify this gentleman,
For, in my mind, you are much bound to him.

[*Exeunt Duke and his train.*

LINE 394. "The sudden change of Shylock's whole appearance when the cause turned against him; the happy pause in 'I am content,' as if it almost choked him to bring out the words; the partial bowing down of his inflexible will when he said, 'I pray you give me leave to go from hence; I am not well'; the horror of his countenance when told of his enforced conversion to Christianity, and, to crown all, the fine mixture of scorn and pity with which he turned and surveyed the ribald Gratiano, all exhibited a succession of studies to which words fail to do justice." — Hawkins: *Life of Kean.* 399. *ten more:* making twelve, the number of men on a jury. Venetian courts, however, had no juries. 406. *gratify:* recompense.

Bass. Most worthy gentleman, I and my friend
Have by your wisdom been this day acquitted
Of grievous penalties; in lieu whereof,
Three thousand ducats, due unto the Jew,
We freely cope your courteous pains withal. 410

Ant. And stand indebted, over and above,
In love and service to you evermore.

Por. He is well paid that is well satisfied;
And I, delivering you, am satisfied
And therein do account myself well paid:
My mind was never yet more mercenary.
I pray you, know me when we meet again:
I wish you well, and so I take my leave. 420

Bass. Dear sir, of force I must attempt you
further:

Take some remembrance of us, as a tribute,
Not as a fee: grant me two things, I pray you,
Not to deny me, and to pardon me.

Por. You press me far, and therefore I will
yield.

[*To Ant.*] Give me your gloves, I'll wear them for
your sake:

[*To Bass.*] And, for your love, I'll take this ring
from you:

Do not draw back your hand; I'll take no more;
And you in love shall not deny me this.

Bass. This ring, good sir, alas, it is a trifle! 430
I will not shame myself to give you this.

Por. I will have nothing else but only this;
And now methinks I have a mind to it.

Bass. There's more depends on this than on the
value.

The dearest ring in Venice will I give you,

LINE 412. *cope*: reward. 421. *offorce*: necessarily. 434. The second *on* may be a misprint.

And find it out by proclamation:
Only for this, I pray you, pardon me.

Por. I see, sir, you are liberal in offers:
You taught me first to beg; and now methinks
You teach me how a beggar should be answer'd. 440

Bass. Good sir, this ring was given me by my wife;

And when she put it on, she made me vow
That I should neither sell nor give nor lose it.

Por. That 'scuse serves many men to save their gifts.

An if your wife be not a mad-woman,
And know how well I have deserved the ring,
She would not hold out enemy for ever,
For giving it to me. Well, peace be with you!

[*Exeunt Portia and Nerissa.*

Ant. My Lord Bassanio, let him have the ring;
Let his deservings and my love withal
Be valued 'gainst your wife's commandment. 450

Bass. Go, Gratiano, run and overtake him;
Give him the ring, and bring him, if thou canst,
Unto Antonio's house: away! make haste.

[*Exit Gratiano.*

Come, you and I will thither presently;
And in the morning early will we both
Fly toward Belmont: come, Antonio. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II — *The same. A street*

Enter PORTIA and NERISSA

Por. Inquire the Jew's house out, give him this deed
And let him sign it: we'll away to-night

LINE 451. *commandment.* The old spelling was "commandement," and the *e* was sounded.

And be a day before our husbands home:
This deed will be well welcome to Lorenzo.

Enter GRATIANO

Gra. Fair sir, you are well o'erta'en:
My Lord Bassanio upon more advice
Hath sent you here this ring, and doth entreat
Your company at dinner.

Por. That cannot be:
His ring I do accept most thankfully:
And so, I pray you, tell him: furthermore,
I pray you, show my youth old Shylock's house. 10

Gra. That will I do.

Ner. Sir, I would speak with you.
[Aside to *Por.*] I'll see if I can get my husband's
ring,

Which I did make him swear to keep for ever.

Por. [Aside to *Ner.*] Thou mayst, I warrant.
We shall have old swearing
That they did give the rings away to men;
But we'll outface them, and outswear them too.
[Aloud] Away! make haste: thou know'st where I
will tarry.

Ner. Come, good sir, will you show me to this 20
house? [Exeunt.]

LINE 6. *advice*: reflection. 15. *old*. Used colloquially, as in
“a high old time.”

ACT V

SCENE I — *Belmont. Avenue to PORTIA's house*
Enter LORENZO and JESSICA

Lor. The moon shines bright: in such a night as this,

When the sweet wind did gently kiss the trees
And they did make no noise, in such a night
Troilus methinks mounted the Troyan walls
And sigh'd his soul toward the Grecian tents,
Where Cressid lay that night.

Jes. In such a night

Did Thisbe fearfully o'ertrip the dew
And saw the lion's shadow ere himself,
And ran dismay'd away.

Lor. In such a night

Stood Dido with a willow in her hand
Upon the wild sea banks, and waft her love
To come again to Carthage.

Jes. In such a night

Medea gather'd the enchanted herbs
That did renew old Æson.

Lor. In such a night

Did Jessica steal from the wealthy Jew
And with an unthrift love did run from Venice
As far as Belmont.

10

Lorenzo and Jessica are walking in the avenue that leads to Portia's villa. Behind them a flight of steps ascends to an Ionic portico. On either side statues and fountains gleam white in the moonlight, interspersed with blooming shrubs and flowery banks. Occasionally a cloud moves across the sky, hiding the moon.

LINE 4. *Troilus.* The references here, though classical, are probably to Chaucer. Hunter pictures Shakespeare writing this dialogue with an old folio of Chaucer lying open before him. First he glances at the *Troilus and Criseyde*, and then, turning the leaves of *The Legend of Good Women*, he comes upon the stories of Thisbe, Dido, and Medea. 11. *waft:* wafted.

Jes. In such a night
Did young Lorenzo swear he loved her well,
Stealing her soul with many vows of faith
And ne'er a true one.

Lor. In such a night
Did pretty Jessica, like a little shrew,
Slander her love, and he forgave it her.

Jes. I would out-night you, did no body come;
But, hark, I hear the footing of a man.

Enter STEPHANO

Lor. Who comes so fast in silence of the night?

Steph. A friend.

Lor. A friend! what friend? your name, I pray
you, friend?

Steph. Stephano is my name; and I bring word
My mistress will before the break of day
Be here at Belmont: she doth stray about
By holy crosses, where she kneels and prays
For happy wedlock hours.

Lor. Who comes with her?

Steph. None but a holy hermit and her maid.
I pray you, is my master yet return'd?

Lor. He is not, nor we have not heard from him.
But go we in, I pray thee, Jessica,
And ceremoniously let us prepare
Some welcome for the mistress of the house.

Enter LAUNCELOT

Laun. Sola, sola! wo ha, ho! sola, sola!

Lor. Who calls?

40

LINE 28. *Stephano*, pronounced Ste-phah-no. 39. *sola*.
Launcelot is imitating the horn by which the "post" or messenger announced his approach. According to Ben Greet's stage directions, he runs around smacking his whip and jumping. He carries a lantern to indicate night.

Laun. Sola! did you see Master Lorenzo?
Master Lorenzo, sola, sola!

Lor. Leave hollaing, man: here.

Laun. Sola! where? where?

Lor. Here.

Laun. Tell him there's a post come from my master, with his horn full of good news: my master will be here ere morning. [Exit.

Lor. Sweet soul, let's in, and there expect their coming.

And yet no matter: why should we go in? 50

My friend Stephano, signify, I pray you,
Within the house, your mistress is at hand;
And bring your music forth into the air. [Exit Stephano.
How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank!

Here will we sit and let the sounds of music
Creep in our ears: soft stillness and the night
Become the touches of sweet harmony.

Sit, Jessica. Look how the floor of heaven
Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold:
There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st 60
But in his motion like an angel sings,
Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubins;
Such harmony is in immortal souls;
But whilst this muddy vesture of decay
Doth grossly close us in, we cannot hear it.

Enter Musicians

Come, ho! and wake Diana with a hymn:
With sweetest touches pierce your mistress' ear
And draw her home with music. [Music.

LINE 49. *expect*: await. 59. *patines*: small gold plates used in the Holy Communion. 60-65. This passage may refer to *Job xxxviii*, 7: "When the morning stars sang together," or to the old belief in the "music of the spheres," too delicate for human ears to hear. 62. *Still*: always. 62. "Cherubins" is the French form for *cherubim*. 66. *wake Diana*. Diana, the moon, has covered her face with a cloud while Lorenzo has been observing the stars.

Jes. I am never merry when I hear sweet music.

Lor. The reason is, your spirits are attentive: 70

For do but note a wild and wanton herd,
 Or race of youthful and unhandled colts,
 Fetching mad bounds, bellowing and neighing loud,
 Which is the hot condition of their blood;
 If they but hear perchance a trumpet sound,
 Or any air of music touch their ears,
 You shall perceive them make a mutual stand,
 Their savage eyes turn'd to a modest gaze
 By the sweet power of music: therefore the poet
 Did feign that Orpheus drew trees, stones and floods; 80
 Since nought so stockish, hard and full of rage,
 But music for the time doth change his nature.
 The man that hath no music in himself,
 Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds,
 Is fit for treasons, stratagems and spoils;
 The motions of his spirit are dull as night
 And his affections dark as Erebus:
 Let no such man be trusted. Mark the music.

Enter PORTIA and NERISSA

Por. That light we see is burning in my hall.
 How far that little candle throws his beams!
 So shines a good deed in a naughty world. 90

Ner. When the moon shone, we did not see the
 candle.

Por. So doth the greater glory dim the less:
 A substitute shines brightly as a king
 Until a king be by, and then his state

LINE 79. *poet.* Probably refers to Ovid. 87. *Erebus:* underworld. 89. "Portia is still full of the strong emotion roused in her by the trial; on her way home she has talked with the hermit, and prayed at wayside crosses. For a while her reflections are grave and serious. She stands above Jessica and Lorenzo and talks softly to Nerissa, while the music plays." — Arden Edition. 91. *naughty:* evil, bad.

Empties itself, as doth an inland brook
Into the main of waters. Music! hark!

Ner. It is your music, madam, of the house.

Por. Nothing is good, I see, without respect:
Methinks it sounds much sweeter than by day.

100

Ner. Silence bestows that virtue on it, madam.

Por. The crow doth sing as sweetly as the lark
When neither is attended, and I think

The nightingale, if she should sing by day,
When every goose is cackling, would be thought
No better a musician than the wren.

How many things by season season'd are
To their right praise and true perfection!

Peace, ho! the moon sleeps with Endymion
And would not be awaked.

[*Music ceases.*

Lor. That is the voice,

110

Or I am much deceived, of Portia.

Por. He knows me as the blind man knows the
cuckoo,

By the bad voice.

Lor. Dear lady, welcome home.

Por. We have been praying for our husbands'
healths,

Which speed, we hope, the better for our words.
Are they return'd?

Lor. Madam, they are not yet;
But there is come a messenger before,
To signify their coming.

Por. Go in, Nerissa;
Give order to my servants that they take
No note at all of our being absent hence;

120

Nor you, Lorenzo; Jessica, nor you. [A *tucket* sounds.]

LINE 99. *respect* (to circumstance). 109. The story was that each night Diana kissed the young shepherd, Endymion, as he lay asleep on Mt. Latmos. 121. *tucket*: flourish on a trumpet. (Italian *toccata*.)

Lor. Your husband is at hand; I hear his trumpet:
We are no tell-tales, madam; fear you not.

Por. This night methinks is but the daylight sick:
It looks a little paler: 'tis a day,
Such as the day is when the sun is hid.

*Enter BASSANIO, ANTONIO, GRATIANO, and their
followers*

Bass. We should hold day with the Antipodes,
If you would walk in absence of the sun.

Por. Let me give light, but let me not be light;
For a light wife doth make a heavy husband, 130
And never be Bassanio so for me:
But God sort all! You are welcome home, my lord.

Bass. I thank you, madam. Give welcome to my
friend.
This is the man, this is Antonio,
To whom I am so infinitely bound.

Por. You should in all sense be much bound to
him,
For, as I hear, he was much bound for you.

Ant. No more than I am well acquitted of.

Por. Sir, you are very welcome to our house:
It must appear in other ways than words, 140
Therefore I scant this breathing courtesy.

Gra. [To Ner.] By yonder moon I swear you do me
wrong;
In faith, I gave it to the judge's clerk.

Por. A quarrel, ho, already! what's the matter?

Gra. About a hoop of gold, a paltry ring
That she did give me, whose posy was
For all the world like cutler's poetry
Upon a knife, "Love me, and leave me not." 150

LINE 127. *hold day with the Antipodes*: have daylight at night.
132. *sort*: dispose. 148. *posy*: sentiment inscribed inside a ring.

Ner. What talk you of the posy or the value?
 You swore to me, when I did give it you,
 That you would wear it till your hour of death
 And that it should lie with you in your grave:
 Though not for me, yet for your vehement oaths,
 You should have been respective and have kept it.
 Gave it a judge's clerk! no, God's my judge,
 The clerk will ne'er wear hair on's face that had it.

Gra. He will, and if he live to be a man.

Ner. Ay, if a woman live to be a man.

160

Gra. Now, by this hand, I gave it to a youth,
 A kind of boy, a little scrubbed boy,
 No higher than thyself, the judge's clerk,
 A prating boy, that begg'd it as a fee:
 I could not for my heart deny it him.

Por. You were to blame, I must be plain with
 you,

To part so slightly with your wife's first gift;
 A thing stuck on with oaths upon your finger
 And riveted with faith unto your flesh.
 I gave my love a ring and made him swear
 Never to part with it; and here he stands;
 I dare be sworn for him he would not leave it
 Nor pluck it from his finger, for the wealth
 That the world masters. Now, in faith, Gratiano,
 You give your wife too unkind a cause of grief:
 An 'twere to me, I should be mad at it.

170

Bass. [Aside] Why, I were best to cut my left hand
 off

And swear I lost the ring defending it.

Gra. My Lord Bassanio gave his ring away
 Unto the judge that begg'd it and indeed

180

LINE 156. *respective*: mindful. 162. *scrubbed*: as in scrub oak.
 "Gratiano measures the height of the 'boy' each time, emphasizing the word." — Ben Greet.

Deserved it too; and then the boy, his clerk,
That took some pains in writing, he begg'd mine;
And neither man nor master would take aught
But the two rings.

Por. What ring gave you, my lord?
Not that, I hope, which you received of me.

Bass. If I could add a lie unto a fault,
I would deny it; but you see my finger
Hath not the ring upon it; it is gone.

Por. Even so void is your false heart of truth.

Bass. Sweet Portia, 192
If you did know to whom I gave the ring,
If you did know for whom I gave the ring,
And would conceive for what I gave the ring
And how unwillingly I left the ring,
When nought would be accepted but the ring,
You would abate the strength of your displeasure.

Por. If you had known the virtue of the ring,
Or half her worthiness that gave the ring, 200
Or your own honour to contain the ring,
You would not then have parted with the ring.
What man is there so much unreasonable,
If you had pleased to have defended it
With any terms of zeal, wanted the modesty
To urge the thing held as a ceremony?
Nerissa teaches me what to believe:
I'll die for't but some woman had the ring.

Bass. No, by my honour, madam, by my soul,
No woman had it, but a civil doctor, 210
Which did refuse three thousand ducats of me
And begg'd the ring; the which I did deny him
And suffer'd him to go displeased away;
Even he that did uphold the very life

LINE 201. *contain*: retain. 205. *wanted the modesty*: as to have lacked the moderation. 210. *civil doctor*: doctor of civil law.

Of my dear friend. What should I say, sweet lady?
 I was enforced to send it after him;
 I was beset with shame and courtesy;
 My honour would not let ingratitude
 So much besmear it. Pardon me, good lady;
 For, by these blessed candles of the night, 220
 Had you been there, I think you would have begg'd
 The ring of me to give the worthy doctor.

Por. Let not that doctor e'er come near my house:
 Since he hath got the jewel that I loved,
 And that which you did swear to keep for me,
 I will become as liberal as you;
 I'll not deny him anything I have.

Ant. I am the unhappy subject of these quarrels.

Por. Sir, grieve not you; you are welcome notwithstanding.

Bass. Portia, forgive me this enforced wrong; 240
 And, in the hearing of these many friends,
 I swear to thee, even by thine own fair eyes,
 Wherein I see myself —

Por. Mark you but that!
 In both my eyes he doubly sees himself;
 In each eye, one: swear by your double self,
 And there's an oath of credit.

Bass. Nay, but hear me:
 Pardon this fault, and by my soul I swear
 I never more will break an oath with thee.

Ant. I once did lend my body for his wealth;
 Which, but for him that had your husband's ring, 250
 Had quite miscarried: I dare be bound again,
 My soul upon the forfeit, that your lord
 Will never more break faith advisedly.

LINE 220. *candles of the night:* stars. 238. "Antonio has patiently remained, mildly protesting and somewhat amused. Possibly he is glad he is not married." — Ben Greet.

Por. Then you shall be his surety. Give him this
And bid him keep it better than the other.

Ant. Here, Lord Bassanio; swear to keep this ring.

Bass. By heaven, it is the same I gave the doctor!

Por. I had it of him. You are all amaz'd:
Here is a letter; read it at your leisure;
It comes from Padua, from Bellario:
There you shall find that Portia was the doctor,
Nerissa there her clerk: Lorenzo here
Shall witness I set forth as soon as you
And even but now return'd; I have not yet
Enter'd my house. Antonio, you are welcome;
And I have better news in store for you
Than you expect: unseal this letter soon;
There you shall find three of your argosies
Are richly come to harbour suddenly:
You shall not know by what strange accident
I chanced on this letter.

Ant. I am dumb.

Bass. Were you the doctor and I knew you not? 280

Ant. Sweet lady, you have given me life and
living;

For here I read for certain that my ships
Are safely come to road.

Por. How now, Lorenzo!

My clerk hath some good comforts too for you.

Ner. Ay, and I'll give them him without a fee. 290
There do I give to you and Jessica,
From the rich Jew, a special deed of gift,
After his death, of all he dies possess'd of.

Lor. Fair ladies, you drop manna in the way
Of starved people.

Por. It is almost morning,
And yet I am sure you are not satisfied

Of these events at full. Let us go in;
And charge us there upon inter'gatories,
And we will answer all things faithfully.

Gra. Well, while I live I'll fear no other thing 306
So sore as keeping safe Nerissa's ring. [Exeunt.]

LINE 298. *inter'gatories.* In the Court of Queen's Bench, witnesses "charged upon interrogatories" must swear to speak the whole truth. Portia suggests changing places, she and Nerissa becoming the witnesses and their husbands the examiners.

"In conclusion, when Portia invites her company to enter her palace to refresh themselves after their travels, and talk over 'these events at full,' the imagination, unwilling to lose sight of the brilliant group, follows them in gay procession from the lovely moonlit garden to marble halls and princely revels, to splendour and festive mirth, to love and happiness." — Anna Jameson: *Shakespeare's Heroines*.

APPENDIX

I. SUMMARY OF THE PLAY BY ACTS.

As the structure of *The Merchant of Venice* is particularly interesting, the following summary is given to help the student follow the development of the plot more understandingly through the different acts.

In the first scene of Act I, the hero, Bassanio, borrows three thousand ducats of Antonio, merchant of Venice, so that he can fit himself out to pay court to the heiress, Portia. The second scene introduces Portia, mistress of Belmont, who, according to her father's will, can be won only by the choice from among three caskets of the one containing her portrait. Despite the fact that unsuccessful candidates are debarred from ever again wooing "a maid by way of marriage," she is beset with suitors, and there seems to be some danger that one of them will choose the right casket before Bassanio can get to Belmont to try his luck. Before the end of the act, he is evidently in danger also of causing the death of his friend, for Antonio, not having the required three thousand ducats at hand, gives a "playful bond" to Shylock the Jew, contracting to forfeit a pound of his own flesh if he does not redeem the bond within three months.

Act II, bringing in new characters and incidents of absorbing interest, distracts attention from the improbability that so long a time as three months could possibly elapse before Bassanio would reach Belmont. With so much going on — the appearance of the Gobbos, Bassanio's farewell supper party, Jessica's elopement, the rumor that one of Antonio's ships has been lost at sea, the arrival and departure of Portia's unsuccessful suitors, and Shylock's rage at the loss of his daughter, his jewels, and his ducats — no one thinks of time.

Act III first confirms our fears that Bassanio is going to be responsible for Antonio's death, and then, with dramatic contrast, shows him, flushed with success, winning Portia by choosing the leaden casket. This is the turning point, or climax, of the action. In the midst of his triumph, Lorenzo and Jessica, now married, bring him the news that Antonio's situation is desperate;

and after the double wedding — Bassanio and Portia, Gratiano and Nerissa, — both he and Gratiano prepare to go to the assistance of their friend. But before they start, Portia and Nerissa give them the rings which are to provide much of the material of the last act, binding them by a solemn promise never to part with these gifts of love. The act ends with Antonio in the hands of a jailer, Shylock refusing all pleas for mercy, and Portia preparing to set out for Venice, disguised as a lawyer, to defend her husband's friend.

Act IV begins with the Trial Scene, in which Shylock takes his stand on the letter of the law and demands his bond. He refuses Bassanio's offer of twice, even thrice, the amount, and replies to the Doge's plea for mercy by the specious argument that he has bought this pound of flesh and has the same right to it that Venetians have to the human flesh they buy in the slave market. Portia now appears in place of the famous Dr. Bellario to whom the Doge had referred the case, and having heard the evidence, made one more futile plea for mercy and been accepted as judge by both parties to the suit, she decrees that the Jew may have the flesh but not one drop of blood. Aghast, Shylock would reconsider his refusal and take his money, but she will not allow it; and she pronounces him guilty under an old law of Venice which condemned to death and confiscation any alien who practised against the life of a citizen. He is, however, offered the boon of life and the return of half his goods on condition that he make a will in favor of his daughter and become a Christian. He consents, leaving the court a broken and defeated man.

At this point the episode of the rings relieves a situation too tense for comedy. Bassanio, offering the young judge a fee, is met by a refusal to accept anything but the ring his wife gave him. At first he refuses to give it up and the disguised lady leaves the court in apparent dudgeon. But at last, charged with ingratitude, he sends it after her by Gratiano; and Gratiano himself is coaxed into giving his own ring to Nerissa as the judge's clerk.

Act V opens upon a delightful scene in which romantic love, "touches of sweet harmony," and a background of Italian landscape gardening combine to enchant and soothe after the excitement of the last act. Lorenzo and Jessica, taking sweet counsel together in the moonlight outside the villa at Belmont, are interrupted by Portia's return from Venice with Nerissa, followed closely by Bassanio, Gratiano, and Antonio. The two husbands have great difficulty in excusing the loss of their rings to their

offended wives, but at last all is explained and forgiven. The play comes to a merry conclusion with the announcement that Antonio's ships have come safely to harbor, and that Lorenzo and Jessica have been provided for in Shylock's will.

2. SUGGESTIONS FOR DRAMATIC PRESENTATION.

Acting a play is always the best way to study it, and this is especially true of a Shakespearian play, in which so many passages are worth memorizing and so many characters worthy of careful study. An attempt to impersonate a character or to render lines with the proper dramatic effect leads to a far deeper and truer understanding than a mere reading can possibly give.

If it is too great a task to present *The Merchant of Venice* entire, a class will gain much pleasure and profit by acting at least some of the scenes from it. They may do them as simply as they like, — even on a classroom platform if nothing better offers; but some kind of stage should be available in almost any school and the weekly assembly will always furnish an audience.

A setting of dark gray curtains or screens makes an excellent and simple background for the brilliant costumes, especially if the hall can be darkened and colored lights thrown on them. A few chairs, dark and solid, a table for the court room, flowers and a bit of statuary for the garden, vary the scene sufficiently; and automobile lights with colored plates produce delightful lighting effects.

Elizabethan costumes, — high plaited ruffs and wide skirts for the women, and knee breeches, capes or jackets with full slashed sleeves and plumed hats for the men, are easily copied from pictures, the Jewish gaberdine even more easily, and two scholars' gowns for the Trial Scene can always be borrowed. Crape paper, especially the satin kind, is quite satisfactory for parts of costumes that cannot be arranged from material at hand. It can be sewn on old cloth where a strain will come on it, and is to be had in rich colors. A costume committee, present at some of the rehearsals, will enjoy attending to such matters.

Either a single scene or a playlet made up of several scenes may be given. A delightful playlet, based on the Casket Scene, consists of Act I, scene 2; Act II, scenes 1, 7, and 9, and Act III, scene 2 as far as Bassanio's "But who comes here?" when a wedding march should break in loudly, appearing to drown out further speech; supers dressed as members of Portia's household should come on, and a bustle of congratulations in dumb show

and laughter, or, if preferred, a dance, end the scene. The princes of Morocco and Arragon should have attendants, and it is effective to herald their arrival and departure by a blare of trumpets.

The Trial Scene has always been a favorite with amateurs. It plays a little over half an hour, and may be both lengthened and improved by putting in before it the first and third scenes of Act I. Roy Mitchell (*Shakespeare for Community Players*) gives some excellent suggestions for the arrangement:

"In the Trial Scene, the buffer figure of Portia is the fulcrum of a lever, and appropriately enough the design on further elaboration becomes a living pair of scales. On one end of the beam is Antonio with his friends; on the other, Shylock, friendless, but supported by the officers of the law, whose force he uses. Between the two groups is Portia, and above all the Duke and the Magnificoes; the Duke higher than the rest, not only topping the design but making a support for the pendant scale figure."

If the whole play is to be given, it will be wise to consult *Shakespeare for Community Players*, by Mitchell, and also the Ben Greet edition of *The Merchant of Venice*, which gives professional stage business.

3. MEMORABLE PASSAGES.

Nature hath framed strange fellows in her time. — I. i.

I hold the world but as the world, Gratiano;
A stage where every man must play a part,
And mine a sad one. — I. i.

I am Sir Oracle,
And when I ope my lips let no dog bark! — I. i.

Gratiano speaks an infinite deal of nothing, more than any man in all Venice. His reasons are as two grains of wheat hid in two bushels of chaff: you shall seek all day ere you find them, and when you have them, they are not worth the search. — I. i.

They are as sick that surfeit with too much, as they that starve with nothing. — I. 2.

If to do were as easy as to know what were good to do, chapels had been churches, and poor men's cottages princes' palaces. — I. 2.

It is a good divine that follows his own instructions: I can easier teach twenty what were good to be done, than be one of the twenty to follow mine own teaching. — I. 2.

The devil can cite Scripture for his purpose. — I. 3.

O, what a goodly outside falsehood hath! — I. 3.

I like not fair terms and a villain's mind. — I. 3.

It is a wise father that knows his own child. — II. 2.

For lovers ever run before the clock. — II. 6.

Who riseth from a feast
With that keen appetite that he sits down?
Where is the horse that doth untread again
His tedious measures with the unbated fire
That he did pace them first? All things that are,
Are with more spirit chased than enjoy'd. — II. 6.

But love is blind, and lovers cannot see
The pretty follies that themselves commit. — II. 6.

All that glisters is not gold. — II. 7.

Let none presume
To wear an undeserved dignity.
O, that estates, degrees and offices
Were not derived corruptly, and that clear honour
Were purchased by the merit of the wearer!
How many then should cover that stand bare!
How many be commanded that command! — II. 9.

A day in April never came so sweet,
To show how costly summer was at hand. — II. 9.

Hath not a Jew eyes? hath not a Jew hands? — III. 1.

The villany you teach me, I will execute, and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction. — III. 1.

Tell me where is fancy bred,
Or in the heart or in the head?

Reply, reply.

It is engender'd in the eyes,
With gazing fed; and fancy dies
In the cradle where it lies.

Let us all ring fancy's knell;
I'll begin it, — Ding, dong, bell. — III. 2.

For in companions
 That do converse and waste the time together,
 Whose souls do bear an equal yoke of love,
 There must be needs a like proportion
 Of lineaments, of manners, and of spirit. — III. 4.

What, wouldst thou have a serpent sting thee twice? — IV. 1.

You may as well go stand upon the beach
 And bid the main flood bate his usual height;
 You may as well use question with the wolf
 Why he hath made the ewe bleat for the lamb;
 You may as well forbid the mountain pines
 To wag their high tops and to make no noise
 When they are fretten with the gusts of heaven;
 You may as well do any thing most hard,
 As seek to soften that — than which what's harder? —
 His Jewish heart. — IV. 1.

The quality of mercy is not strain'd,
 It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
 Upon the place beneath: it is twice blest;
 It blesseth him that gives and him that takes:
 'Tis mightiest in the mightiest: it becomes
 The throned monarch better than his crown;
 His sceptre shows the force of temporal power,
 The attribute to awe and majesty,
 Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings;
 But mercy is above this sceptred sway;
 It is enthroned in the hearts of kings,
 It is an attribute to God himself;
 And earthly power doth then show likest God's
 When mercy seasons justice. — IV. 1.

A Daniel come to judgement! Yea, a Daniel! — IV. 1.

The moon shines bright: in such a night as this,
 When the sweet wind did gently kiss the trees
 And they did make no noise, in such a night
 Troilus methinks mounted the Troyan walls
 And sigh'd his soul toward the Grecian tents,
 Where Cressid lay that night. — V. 1.

How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank!
 Here will we sit and let the sounds of music
 Creep in our ears: soft stillness and the night
 Become the touches of sweet harmony.
 Sit, Jessica. Look how the floor of heaven
 Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold:

There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st
But in his motion like an angel sings,
Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubins;
Such harmony is in immortal souls. — V. i.

The man that hath no music in himself,
Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds,
Is fit for treasons, stratagems and spoils. — V. i.

How far that little candle throws his beams!
So shines a good deed in a naughty world. — V. i.

QUESTIONS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Let the pupils bring into the class any books they can find that have pictures of Venice in them and point out scenes that might be used to illustrate the play; canals, gondolas, streets in Venice, palaces or villas in which the characters might have lived.
2. The local color in this play has led some critics to believe that Shakespeare must have visited Venice. Give as much evidence as possible to support this theory, noting lines in which he introduces (1) the language, (2) the manners and customs, (3) landmarks.
3. Would you prefer *The Merchant of Venice* or *The Jew of Venice* as a title for this play? Discuss, using quotations to support your points, how Antonio may be said to embody the ideal of a Venetian merchant of that day.
4. Enumerate Shylock's wrongs and troubles as we see them in the play, and discuss both the effect they would naturally have on his character and the light they throw on the position of a Jew in sixteenth-century Europe as one of a persecuted race and as a usurer.
5. William Winter remarks that Shylock has been represented by actors as either a martyr or a miscreant. Does either conception seem to you correct? Explain.
6. Shakespeare is said to give the keynote of his play in the first scene. How does Scene 1 suggest the mood of this play?
7. Sum up Portia's character in half a dozen adjectives; mention speeches or incidents that illustrate each.
8. Compare the discussion of the suitors in I. 2 with a similar scene in *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, I. 2, showing how Shakespeare has here improved on his earlier work both in matter and manner.

9. Go over carefully I. 2 and pick out speeches that show Portia's quickness in repartee, her good sense, her lively spirits, her keen insight into character. The two girls are bubbling over with laughter; do we laugh with them or do we find them ill-naturedly sharp?

10. Who was responsible for the peculiar device by which Portia must be won? What did the suitors have to promise to do if they chose the wrong casket? What was Nerissa's comment on the situation? Do you agree with her that the suitor who chose the leaden casket might prove by his wise choice that he would make a good husband? What was the legend on each casket? The preachers of that day often used this old story about the caskets to illustrate sermons; what point do you suppose they were trying to make?

11. What were the reasons given by each of the suitors for his choice of a casket? Sketch briefly the characters of the Prince of Morocco and the Prince of Arragon.

12. Discuss Bassanio (1) as a lover, (2) as a friend, (3) as a man.

13. Note the scenes in this play in which prose is used. Can you guess what influenced Shakespeare's choice of prose for them? Where is a song introduced?

14. Paraphrase the famous speech of Shylock, III. 1. 55-76.

15. Give examples from this play of (1) obsolete words, (2) words used in a sense different from that of to-day, (3) unusual words.

16. Sketch briefly the characters of Lorenzo and Jessica and show how an Elizabethan audience would have been likely to regard their elopement.

17. What are the two main threads of plot in *The Merchant of Venice*? Show how they are woven together.

18. What minor plots are combined with the two principal ones? At what point in the action is each introduced?

19. What is the situation at the end of the first act? What does the second act add to the plot? At what point do we find the climax or turning point? What thread of the plot is unraveled in Act III? In Act IV? In Act V?

20. Where does a masquerade occur in this play? Why is it especially suggestive of Venetian life? Explain the effectiveness of such scenes on the stage. Can you think of any in other Shakespearean plays?

21. Shakespeare quotes in *As You Like It*: "Whoever loved that loved not at first sight?" Can you illustrate this line from *The Merchant of Venice*?

22. How is the Jessica story used to throw light on Shylock's character and win sympathy for him? Quote passages to illustrate your points.

23. In I. 3. 43-52, what are the three reasons Shylock gives for seeking vengeance on Antonio? Cite other lines in the play that support his position on these three points.

24. Discuss whether this lesson may properly be drawn from *The Merchant of Venice*: "Whatever the play may have meant in Shakespeare's day, to-day it has become a plea for those who, isolated and looked down upon, cannot be expected to see and feel and act as other people may." — F. G. Barker: *Forty-minute Plays from Shakespeare*.

25. Name as many as you can of the means Shakespeare has used to bring out the evil in Shylock's character, and show how he has managed to excite sympathy for him in spite of it. Do you think he intended to do this, or is the sympathy we feel due to the modern pity for the under dog? In your discussion, use what you know of the different ways in which the part of Shylock has been made up and acted.

26. Follow step by step Portia's conduct of the case of Shylock *vs.* Antonio, noting (1) her attitude towards him at the beginning, (2) at what point she ceases to plead with him and begins to prosecute him, (3) the different points she makes against him.

27. Does Shakespeare suggest a side of Shylock's character different from that he shows to his enemies? Are there hints in the play that he loved his wife? Was he fond of his daughter? Was he a consistent Jew in his religious observances? Had he friends?

28. List the references Shylock makes to the Scriptures. What effect is gained by their introduction?

29. Comment on Shakespeare's use of classical mythology and the sources from which he probably drew his knowledge of it.

30. For some time before Henry Irving produced *The Merchant of Venice* it had been customary for stage managers to omit Act V. What do you think were his reasons for restoring it?

31. How does the episode of the rings throw light on Portia's character? Is there any other reason for introducing it?

32. Write a theme on the poetry of the last act, treating the following topics:

(1) Poetry of atmosphere — the setting Shakespeare gives the scene.

(2) Poetry of situation — youth and love.

(3) Poetry of expression. Dwell particularly on the last topic, noting beauty of imagery, figures of speech, and choice of words.

33. In the Quartos Launcelot Gobbo is referred to as a "Clowne." In what sense is this a good description of him? Does his humor consist mainly in what he does, in what he says, or in how he says it? Can you compare him with any other rustic in Shakespeare's plays?

34. As a study of different types of humor in this play, compare the humor of Portia, of Gratiano, and of Launcelot Gobbo.

35. Comment on the character of Gratiano, treating the following points: (1) Whether Bassanio is justified in saying that "his reasons are as two grains of wheat hid in two bushels of chaff." (2) Bassanio's comments on Gratiano's character when he decides to take him to Belmont. (3) How Gratiano lives up to his promises. (4) The part he takes in the Trial Scene, explaining why an Elizabethan audience would have enjoyed his taunts. (5) His wooing of Nerissa. (6) Sum up his character, showing how he enlivens the play.

36. What scene in the play do you find the most (1) humorous; (2) entertaining; (3) tragic; (4) poetic? Discuss each at some length, giving reasons for your preference.

37. Let different students look up and explain to the class more fully than they are explained in the notes the following allusions:

(1) "A Daniel come to judgment."

(2) "Cato's daughter, Brutus' Portia."

(3) "Which makes her seat of Belmont Colchos' strand,
And many Jasons come in quest of her."

In what other play is a similar allusion found?

(4) "Troilus methinks mounted the Troyan walls."
(5) "Did Thisbe fearfully o'ertrip the dew."
(6) "Stood Dido with a willow in her hand."
(7) "Medea gathered the enchanted herbs."

38. On what occasions does Shakespeare introduce instrumental music? Vocal music? Is there dramatic reason for the choice of one or the other? What is said of "the man that hath no music in himself"? What is the theory of the "music of the spheres" mentioned in this play?

39. List ten instances where "of" is used with verbs that now take other prepositions or none.

40. Write a brief outline of Shylock's life, as for a biographical dictionary, supplying probable data where no information is given in the play.

41. Write an imaginary sketch of Portia's life up to the time of her marriage, touching upon her early intellectual and religious training, her life at Belmont, the companionship of Nerissa, her probable part in Venetian gaieties, her first sight of Bassanio, her father's death, the conditions of his will, her many suitors, the coming of Bassanio, her fears lest he choose the wrong casket, and the final happy outcome. Write it as if it were a short story in a magazine, making it as entertaining as possible.

42. Make a careful study of the entrances and exits in II. 5-6; III. 2; IV. 1, and with this in mind discuss Sir Henry Irving's statement: "No actor ever had reason to complain that Shakespeare sent him tamely off (the stage) or brought him feebly on."

43. If any pupils have seen *The Merchant of Venice*, let them give as full an account as possible of the (1) stage setting, (2) costumes, (3) mechanical effects, (4) music, (5) the relative positions of the important characters in the Trial Scene.

44. Repeat as many as you can of the "Memorable Passages," telling in each case who speaks the lines, to whom they are addressed, and under what circumstances.

BOOKS OF SPECIAL INTEREST

Furness, H. H., ed., *The Merchant of Venice* (Variorum edition).

Hudson, H. N., *Shakespeare, His Life, Art, and Characters*.

Lee, Sidney, *Life of William Shakespeare*.

Mitchell, Roy, *Shakespeare for Community Players*.

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Oliphant, M. O., *Makers of Venice*.

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Thayer, W. R., *The Story of Venice*.

Thorndike, A. H., *Shakespeare's Theatre*.

Ward, A. W., *History of English Dramatic Literature*.

Wendell, Barrett, *William Shakspere*.

Winter, William, *Shakespeare on the Stage*, Vol. I.

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